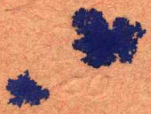
THE
Philosophy of the Beautiful



BY

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1959

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Second Edition

MADRAS
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The following lectures on the Philosophy of the Beautiful were delivered under the auspices of the University of Madras in 1933 when I was Honorary Reader and I have now ventured to publish them in book form. In the first two chapters an attempt is made to define the concept of Beauty which is as autonomous as Truth and Goodness and to examine the standards usually adopted for judging it, in nature and in works of art. In the succeeding two chapters a brief philosophical exposition is given of the ultimate nature of Beauty and the relation between Aesthetics and Religion as understood by India's thinkers like Sankara and Ramanuja. The book ends with a mystic description of God as the beautiful and blissful.

My grateful thanks are due to Rao Sahib M. R. Rajagopala Aiyangar and also to Messrs. K. R. Sarma and T. M. P. Mahadevan for valuable help rendered to me in the preparation of these lectures for the press. I am alo deeply indebted to Messrs. Thompson & Co., Ltd., for the prompt execution of the work in the face of difficulties due to the present situation.

VELLORE,
30—4—1942.

P. N. SRINIVASACHARI.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This work is a contribution to the normative science of Beauty reinterpreted in terms of the Philosophy of Religion and the mystic lore on Brahman as Beauty, Love and Bliss as *tatva hita*, and *purushartha* Beauty harmonises the logical view of truth and the ethical view of goodness and the Bhagavatha specialises in Brahman as Beauty and is the homeland of Vedantic mysticism. This humble attempt is self offering to the soul of Beauty who is Lord Krishna Himself.

My thanks are due to my nephew, R. C. Srinivasa Raghavan, for correcting the proofs and helping in the publication of the books. I also thank the India Printing Works for their neat and prompt printing.

Sri Krishna Library,
Mylapore, Madras-4.
20th Oct., 1958.

P. N. SRINIVASACHARI

TO

MY FRIENDS

V. V. SRINIVASA AIYANGAR

AND

M. R. RAJAGOPALA AIYANGAR

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE BEAUTIFUL

AESTHETICS is the most fascinating of all studies on account of the universal appeal of the beautiful. Aesthetic experience is the enjoyment of beauty, and is an imaginative and emotional activity. It is not a mere futile or frivolous pastime, but has a vital function. It is as valuable as the intellectual or practical activities of life. The physical sciences deal with phenomena or changes of matter, biology deals with life, and psychology with consciousness. The normative sciences like Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics treat of the values of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The Subject of philosophy is the whole of experience, and religion concerns itself with the problem of the soul and its relation to God. In this scheme of studies, aesthetics, as the emotional knowledge of the beautiful, has its rightful place as mediating between logic and ethics as the heart of Reality.

Aesthetic activity has an intrinsic value of its own, different from that of intellectual, ethical and economic activities. It is an end in itself, and not a means to an end. The appreciation of beauty in nature or a work

of art, poem, picture, or song, refines our outlook on life, and enhances its joys by its concentration on what is beautiful. The language of aesthetics is the direct medium of human sympathy and is therefore designed to foster mutual love and common understanding among mankind.

This study of aesthetics begins with a scientific enquiry into the nature of imaginative self-expression. It comprises the subjective and objective methods and is mainly explanatory. The next step in the investigation is an examination of the criteria or standards adopted by critics of art in their evaluation of artistic creations. It marks a transition from the descriptive method to the normative. This would lead to aesthetic philosophy or enquiry into the nature of Reality in its relation to Beauty. This stage may be called the metaphysic of aesthetics. The last step in the enquiry is an exposition of the connection between art and religion, of the conception and apprehension of God as the Beautiful and of the mystic experience of the beauty of God and the bliss of communion with Him.

In the history of Western aesthetic thought each thinker has his own views. The views of thinkers on the nature of the beautiful in nature and art have been coloured by their metaphysical ideas on the nature of reality. What do we mean when we speak of a poem or a piece of music as being beautiful? Is the concept of beauty capable of being defined? Does beauty in nature and art admit of degrees of comparison? Is it

possible to formulate any standards of criteria for judging the beauty of artistic creations? These questions have been answered differently by different thinkers, each, consciously or unconsciously, swayed by his philosophical pre-possessions. An examination of their views may lead to a clarification of our own ideas on the subject.

To Croce, art is pure intuition-expression. The artist's intuition is actualised into expression. To intuit is to express and nothing else but to express. The two are inseparable. The intuition actualises itself, as it were, in expression. This process of intuition finding a form for itself in language, colour or movement is spontaneous, and any attempt of the intellect to intervene destroys the spontaneity and, consequently, the value of the artistic creation. According to Croce, art and beauty are identical. The *esse* of beauty is its *percipi*. Beauty is not a quality of things, but is the result of spiritual activity. Art is of the nature of simple feeling expressing itself before we recognise it. Croce is, therefore, of the opinion that art is the lowest grade of the theoretic spirit, having a place below science, history, philosophy and religion. Art belongs to the theoretic side of our nature and not to the practical. Beauty is intuition and is preconceptual. It is distinct from the pleasant, the useful and the good.

Beauty, according to Croce, is a universal which refers only to irreducible individuals. It contains individuals but no species. It is incapable of being

expressed in terms of genus and species. Each work of art is a single spiritual activity which cannot be analysed or classified. Aesthetic experiences form an adjectiveless universe consisting of self-sufficient entities. The reality of beauty and its autonomy are destroyed by logical dissection and by giving market values to it.

The intuition of beauty is itself, and does not admit of degrees. It is absurd to speak of a work of art, which could have been made more beautiful. The beauty of an artistic creation is thus in a category of its own, unique, incomparable and incommunicable. Each experience of beauty is *sui generis* and not generic, and is its own meaning. The expression of the individual intuition could not have been different, better or worse than it is. Beauty cannot be sectioned and pigeon-holed. The scientist who analyses the tears of his beloved misses its meaning. Asthetic enjoyment is feeling the universe *sub specie intuitionis*.

Croce maintains that a work of art, like a poem or a piece of music, is not a logical judgment and is neither true nor false. It is alogical and cannot be analysed. It is, however, articulate and its inner dialectic is intuition-expression. It is both form and content. Form is filled, and content is formed or shaped. The artistic experience is not a physical fact but a pulsation of emotion. Art is aesthetic synthesis *a priori*. We know only expressed intuitions. In musis, the intuition expresses itself in sounds ; in

poetry, it finds expression in rhythmic language; in painting, the expression takes the form of lines and colours. Language and art are one. Beauty and its expression are, to Corce, indistinguishable, and the logical intellect cannot grasp the concreteness of art. Beauty is thus unique and incommunicable.

Croce's view, that every artistic creation is unique in kind and does not admit of comparison or criticism in respect of its excellence and the degree of its excellence, would bar all judgment or criticism of works of art. Mr. Carritt, in his theory of Beauty, extols Croce's aesthetics as a true philosophy of beauty, and says that beauty is the expression of emotion. But he contradicts himslf when he points out at one time that the expression of any feeling is beautiful and, at another, that only particular expressions are beautiful. Mr. Collingwood, who also claims to follow Croce, says that art is pure imagination, and is prior to thought. Artistic criticism implies the existence of a distinction between the beautiful and the ugly and also the possibility of estimating the relative beauty of two similar artistic products. Just as, in the sphere of knowledge, we distinguish between the true and the false and, in the sphere of morals, between the good and the evil, it is possible also to distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly. Aesthetic experience is intelligible. It is not an indefinable intuition. Beauty is not only appreciated but apprehended. If beauty consisted of atomic entities incapable of comparison and assessment, there could be no such thing as a philosophy art.

It, is the experience of many that the content of beauty admits of qualitative comparison in the light of certain standards or criteria accepted by those who are competent to judge it. Herein lies the justification for a philosophy of art aiming at reducing the manifold of aesthetic experience to a harmonious unity. Beauty is not only a creation but also a criticism. Besides, Croce does not make clear the distinction between intuition and expression. If they are the same, one single concept or term is enough. Also, aesthetics is different from linguistics. If they are the same, every word would be poetry. In assigning to art a lower place than that assigned to science, history or philosophy on the ground that it is the expression of an intuition of feeling, Croce forgets that; as Bergon points out, intuition is often the fulfilment of the intellect; when analysis ends, intuition begins. According to Bergson, intuition seizes reality by entering into its inner meaning and not by movtng round it. The intellect spatialises intuition by dissecting it and giving us sections. Intuition instals itself in the very life of things by going into the interior. Bergson would, therefore, look upon intuition as supra-intellectual and not infra-intellectual. Intuition instals itself into the very heart of reality and penetrates to the truth far more rapidly and infallibly than the loicgal intellect.

If Croce traces beauty to the indefinable and unanalysable intuitions of the mind, the physicists go to the other extreme and consider it as the result of the operation of purely mechanical or physico-chemical

laws. Poetic beauty is a resultant of certain peculari-ties in words and rhythms, painting, in lines and colours, and music, in a fusion of tones. Hogarth finds six elements in the composition of beauty : the fitness of the parts to the general design, variety, uniformity, symmetry, intricacy and magnitude. Beauty resides according to the physicists, in the external lines, qualities of forms, sounds and the like and they trace it to the law of proportion. The serpentine line is looked upon as the line of beauty in painting, and the feminine form is, on this score, the consummation of beauty. Burke's account of beauty as social instinct is also a materialistic description in terms of comparative smallness, delicacy and smoothness, which evoke a feeling of tenderness. Aristotle traced beauty to order symmetry, and definiteness, and the Pythagoreans to the mathematical relation between the parts of a whole. St. Augustine defined beauty in terms of proportion and agreeable colour. The physicists agree in considering the external qualities of objects and their imitation as the basis of beauty. In doing so, they ignore the work-ings of the mind in the experience of the beautiful. The method adopted by the different thinkers in regard to the physical conception of beauty is itself arbitrary and confessedly sceptical. There cannot be any passage from the physical to the aesthetical, and the averaging of reactions is not the proper method of accounting for beauty. Matter is an inert medium, and is often an impediment to the activity of the mind in the spontaneous creation of beauty.

Those who think in terms of biology conceive of beauty as a factor conducive to the survival of the species and thus serving to help the individual in the struggle for existence and in the propagation of the species. Pleasure is, according to them, the result of physiological conditions, and the springs of beauty are related to the vital functions and the animal impulses. Schiller traces art to the development of the play impulse, and play is a manifestation of superfluous energy. Superfluous life stimulates activity, and there is a free play of imagination. Tufts holds that the art-impulse and the appreciation of natural beauty are the bye-products of the sexual demand. According to Darwin, physical beauty is a factor that helps in sexual selection and, thereby, in the propagation of the species. The display of plumage by the male bird and its dances in the pairing season serve to attract the female. The male with the brighter colours and the livelier dance is preferred, and the offspring inherits the colours of the male parent. Thus beauty has a definite biological purpose. Similar is the view implicit in Freudian literature, where erotic experiences are traced to the excitement of sexual beauty. Grant Allen's view is another variety of the biological conception of beauty. He maintains that aesthetic pleasure is the subjective concomitant of the normal amount of activity which cannot be connected directly with the functions that serve the processes of life. Feminine beauty is, in the biologist's opinion, ultimately a derivative of youth and health. Santayana is also naturalistic when he traces

the origin and value of beauty to chance. Matter is primary, and beauty originates in the realm of matter. The collocation and tension of atoms of matter become attractive. The flux of matter becomes alive, and blossoms into a flower. Idle sounds become articulate, and grow into a significant song giving rise to aesthetic delight. Spiritual beauty, so called, is only a cerebral event. Art is super-imposed on nature, and is an arbitrary addition to the animal impulse. The hang of things and their harmony are already present in nature. Metaphysical faith in beauty is derived from the animal faith in the realm of matter. Beauty sleeps in matter, and wakes up in the soul. God is only a mythical name for the process of matter, and metaphysics should give place to physics. The arguments adduced above against the physical view of beauty are equally applicable to the naturalistic or genetic view of Santayana and of the biologists. In stating that the movement of atoms somehow becomes attractive, that inarticulate and idle sounds somehow develop into sense and harmony, and that beauty is an animal impulse and simply turns up, naturalism leans as much on the miraculous as supernaturalism. It fails to explain the inner beauty of things. The physical and biological theories ignore the higher value of beauty, and vulgarise the concept. The attempt to connect the beauty of a work of art with biological ends is not always convincing. Health and youth are often present where no sane man would recognise beauty. The identification of the useful with the beautiful is not

endorsed by experience or common sense, unless the useful is arbitrarily called the beautiful in the interests of the theory. It is an animal faith that leads to materialism and scepticism and the naturalism of Santayana is later touched by Platonism.

If the physical and biological theories find the source of beauty in the properties and qualities of the objects which are considered beautiful, the psychological view tries to account for the conception of beauty in the changes and effects that are caused in the mind of the observer. The first to use the term 'aesthetics' was Baumgarten; its literal meaning is sense-perception: the beauty of a thing is its 'feel' or effect on the senses or the mind. Bain's theory of the beautiful is psychological. Among the chief aesthetic qualities, he mentions sublimity, grace, harmony, melody, proportion, order, fitness, unity and picturesqueness. Beauty is the comprehensive term that embraces all these qualities. The immediate end of the fine arts is, according to Bain, pleasure, and sight and hearing are the aesthetic senses causing this pleasure. Colour is due to harmony; the proper alternations of light and shade stimulate the optic nerve, and produce the sense of beauty. In the Association Theory of Alison and Jeffrey, the main source of beauty is in the power to suggest warm affections. Straightness suggests restraint, and curvature, ease and abandon. Beauty is felt in symmetry, in harmony of sounds, colours and forms, in order due to trimness and tidiness, in the perception of the fitness of means to ends, and in the

feeling of relief arising from the perception of unity in diversity. A winding river disappearing from sight, and haziness in mountain scenery produce an agreeable aesthetic effect. Stewart thinks that there is a primitive organic pleasure in bright colours, and that the beauty of form, colour and motion is determined by the law of association.

Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, on the other hand, assume an internal sense or instinct of the beautiful standing midway between sensuality and rationality. This instinctive or intuitive faculty causes an immediate appreciation of the beautiful. Their view has a close affinity to that of Croce, already referred to. The school of psycho-aesthetics like that of Lipps and the neo-Croceans like Carritt and Collingwood trace beauty to an innate feeling, whose range is as wide as life itself. The sense of beauty is not a blind instinct, but is an appreciation of the beautiful, which can be educated.

Hume's account of the beautiful is sensationalistic. He explains beauty in terms of sense-impressions and their associations. According to Hume, beauty is not a quality of the things themselves; it exists only in the contemplating mind. Pleasure is the very essence of beauty. Herbert Spencer's view is the same as Hume's. Spencer interprets beauty as a perceived relation, and illustrates it with special reference to architecture.

The view, that there is an innate or special faculty which immediately perceives beauty, is now generally discredited. The evolutionists connect aesthetics with

play. Herbert Spencer explains it as a way of expending superfluous energy. The study of the instinct of play and sex has led some psychologists to a play theory and a sex theory of aesthetics. Sport is mere recreation or relaxation from work, and has no practical end. But art is not a form of play as, unlike play, it involves imaginative activity. Some say that the beautiful has its origin in woman. Phallic and Freudian psychology is founded on the aberrations of sex and not on the normal activities. The latter follows the method of psycho-analysis and defines art as the fulfilment, imaginative or real, of perverse, repressed sexual desires. A true artist turns away from reality, and transfers all his *libido* on to the creation of his wishes in the life of phantasy. The artist is between the dreamer and the neurotic. But, as the Earl of Listowel points out, psycho-analysis distorts facts in the interests of a pre-conceived and disgusting theory. Sex is only one aspect of life. The sex appeal may satisfy a biological need, but in its idealistic and mystic aspect, it is a sacred sentiment as illustrated in the immortal fidelity of Savitri and Satyavan, Damayanti and Nala, Candramati and Harischandra and the divine love of Sita and Rama. The psychological theory is wrong in its inference that because a man judges in a certain way, he ought so to judge. The rationalist explains beauty as a scientific truth, as art-critic. For example Descartes deals logically with beauty, defines it as 'equable stimulation' and makes feeling the hand-maid of reason. Leibnitz says that beauty is an 'affair

of ratios'. But the rationalist loses the soul of beauty when he tries to dissect it scientifically.

Men's conception of the nature of beauty has differed also according to what they consider to be the aim or end of life. To the hedonist, whatever gives pleasure is beautiful. The pleasure felt in the mind is due to some quality in the object that has beauty in it. As Santayana puts it, beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing. Beauty is the objectification of pleasure. Marshall says that the products of art are naturally beautiful, and that the art impulse has no other *raison-d'-etre* than pleasure-giving, and is subjective. Others hold that beauty yields satisfaction to the subject, owing to the satisfactoriness of the object. The sense of beauty is relatively a stable pleasure-field, and ugliness is real disagreeableness. Hume also affirms that beauty gives pleasure and deformity, pain. The hedonistic view is open to the criticism that pleasure is not the essential quality of the aesthetic experience, though it may accompany it in a subjective way. The emotionalist says that whatever excites the emotions is beautiful. But unless the emotions excited are desirable or agreeable, whatever excites them cannot be beautiful. There are some theorists who attribute beauty to that which excites a specific emotion, and say that its pleasure is a particular 'feel'. Clive Bell is of opinion that the aesthetic discovery of some central quality common to all objects provides a specific emotion. But this view militates against the universality of aesthetic experience, as it

makes this quality a mysterious or esoteric entity not known to the ordinary man who enjoys the beautiful.

If the hedonist adopts pleasure as the standard of beauty, the moralist explains it in terms of goodness. Whatever is good is beautiful. To Socrates utility is the test of beauty. Whatever is suited to the end intended is fair, and whatever departs from the purpose and is not serviceable, is deformed. But the supreme end is to know what the good or beautiful in itself is. Beauty is, to the moralist, the essence of virtue, and it leads to agreeable or desirable social effect. Beauty is identical with goodness. Ruskin, for instance, says that beauty perfects the ethical nature of man. As the proverb has it, handsome is what handsome does. He says that a material object, which gives us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities without any exertion of the intellect, is beautiful. The artist sees with the inward eye and sees rightly. Tolstoy's conception of beauty and art is also moralistic. To him art is the language of feeling, and it is not only the expression, but also the transmission, of feeling. All true art should have a moral purpose. Beauty should satisfy our moral nature in its purity, and embody the virtue of truth and justice. It is beneficent labour which blesses him that gives and him that receives. Professor Lithaby refers to beauty as an index of the beneficent influence of art on conduct. Art extends our contact with others. Charles Lalo insists on the socialising of aesthetic values. Whatever would lead to desirable consequences in a particular society at a particular

time, and has its social sanction should be considered beautiful. Beauty simply happens to art, and is not one with art. He would therefore reject the dogma that beauty involves an absolute and unchanging standard.

Lipps's view of the beautiful is different from that of the hedonist and of the moralist. According to him, a thing is beautiful, if it is capable of evoking the process of empathy. Empathy is the mental process of projecting oneself into an object and feeling one with it. Beauty is felt and not conceived. We enjoy the beauty of an object in so far as we live in it. The activities of the subject or the person who enjoys the beautiful are merged in the object that is perceived. We extend to the lifeless thing our own feelings, and ascribe movement to the lines and shapes in a picture that are stationary. In the words of Lotze, we project ourselves into the form of a tree, and identify ourselves with its slender shoots which swell and stretch forth, and feel in our souls the delight of the branches. Architecture expresses human moods. For example, a spire soars, arches spring and domes swell. In proportion to the degree of this identification is our perception of the beauty in the tree. In empathy, we feel ourselves into a something as in a dream or a drama. Our personality is identified with the object. Empathy differs from sympathy. In sympathy, the external object is received by us into ourselves; but in empathy, we enter into another. Empathy is to put ourselves inside objects and feel into them and not to feel about them. As

Bergson says, the artist places himself within the interior of the object. As Vernon Lee points out, aesthetic empathy seeks the beautiful shapes or aspects of objects and not the objects themselves. But, while thinking about objects, we think of them away from their shapes or aspects. Lipps says that aesthetic experience is the perception of a spiritual life in animate and inanimate things. The empathist will find it hard to explain the beauty of colours. Colour can be perceived by the eye alone, and cannot be empathised by the soul or ego. Empathy or empathetic satisfaction belongs to the ego and not to the non-ego. The theory does not give a coherent account of beauty; nor does it bring out the full implications of the beautiful.

The enjoyment of beauty is sometimes explained as an act of self-deception. It is due to the illusion of the material thing and of feeling. For example, a flat surface seems to be a solid thing, and a lifeless thing appears to be full of life and feeling. Beauty is thus only an appearance and not something real, and it is this illusion that induces the feeling of pleasure. But the theory of illusion ignores the reality of aesthetic experience, fails to distinguish between art and sport, and does not recognise the ultimate value of the beautiful.

The main theories of the beautiful may now be classified in the language of the Earl of Listowel before we take up the classic exposition of Kant. The theories of aesthetics may be divided into subjective or

psychological theories that refer to a subject, and objective theories that refer to material objects. The former may be sub-divided as follows :—Croce defines art as intuition-expression. The theory of pleasure defines the beautiful as that which pleases the mind. The theory of illusion treats beauty as an illusion of feeling. Psycho-analysis, as the name implies, expounds art as a way of satisfying the repressed sexual impulse. In empathy, the artist projects himself into nature, and the nature of beauty is to be traced to feeling. The objective theories are grouped in the following way :— The theory of nature describes the beauties of natural forms. The sociological theory ascribes the art impulse to the condition of society and its collective life, and determines the place of beauty in the social activities of man. The theory of form traces beauty to the relations of line, colour and volume or to significant form. But none of these theories brings out fully the nature of the beautiful. It was Baumgarten that claimed for aesthetics the status of a separate science.

Kant was the first modern thinker, who laid stress on the difference between the aesthetic consciousness on one side and the logical and the ethical on the other. Feeling, he said in the "Critique of Judgment", is intermediate between the theoretic activity and the practical. Art is beauty fixed about a concept. Artistic beauty is not a beautiful thing, but the beautiful representation of a thing. Art may represent even the ugly aspects of nature, and the representation may be

considered beautiful. Artistic taste results from a combination of intelligence and imagination.

Kant insists on the autonomy of beauty and its distinction from science and metaphysics speaks and of four moments of beauty, and studies aesthetic judgment from the standpoints of quality, quantity, relation and modality. According to him, that is beautiful which pleases without satisfying any practical interest. The pleasure derived from the beautiful is a contemplative pleasure. This is Kant's reply to the English empiricists and sensationalists. The judgment of taste is a disinterested judgment, and the object of such disinterested satisfaction is called beautiful. Beauty is not logical but aesthetical. Thus, from the point of view of quality, it is disinterested. That is beautiful which pleases without a concept. In this way, Kant disposes of the intellectualists. The beautiful is not the good, the true or the useful, but is a spiritual experience. It is the object of universal satisfaction apart from any conception. The judgment of taste implies subjective universality. The aesthetic thought or object is prior to its enjoyment. The former is universal, while the latter is subjective. Thus from the point of view of quantity, beauty is universally valid. That, again, is beautiful, says Kant, which has the form of finality without the representation of an end or purpose. The beautiful has purposiveness without purpose, as it is not an object of sense. Art implies an inner causality. It is not the colour that is pleasant,

but the arrangement of colours. Thus from the point of view of relation, it is purpose without purpose. That is beautiful which necessarily gives satisfaction. The pleasure arising from it is disinterested pleasure; it is the form that pleases and not the sensation. All men enjoy beauty on account of a *sensus communis* or communal sense, by which the feeling of beauty can be communicated. Thus from the point of view of modality it is necessary but exemplary.

Kant's chief contribution to aesthetic philosophy is the liberation of aesthetics from science and ethics and his insistence on the principle of harmony. But his theory is formal, abstract, negative and anaemic, as it tends to destroy the sensitivity for life. The enjoyment of pure beauty cannot be divorced from emotion and sensation, and even sense is a form of reason and has spiritual meaning.

The aesthetic view of beauty is not to be identified with the physical, biological, or psychological accounts outlined above. Croce is right in observing that beauty is not hedonistic, moralistic or intellectualistic. The beautiful is different from the agreeable, the good and the useful. He errs, however, in thinking that it is the lowest grade of the theoretic spirit, lower than history, science or philosophy. It was Kant that clearly formulated the problem of aesthetic philosophy in the West. He defines aesthetic experience as enjoyment in the disinterested contemplation of an object. It excludes the agreeable and the useful from the domain

of the beautiful. The term aesthetics is used in this work in the restricted sense of the experience of the beautiful. The master-thought of Kant was that he freed beauty from the fetters of metaphysics and morals and, at the same time, made it the meeting ground of the two, which he called pure reason and practical reason. The root idea of his philosophy of beauty is the principle of harmony and disinterestedness. But it is vitiated by the abstract method of dissecting reality into the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds and by the defect of subjectivity.

Beauty is a quality of the subject, and is as autonomous as truth and goodness. It is a disinterested experience of the artist, when he contemplates on the harmonious form and content of the aesthetic object. Beauty is clothed in sensuous shapes and sounds to satisfy spiritual needs. Whereas, in ethics and religion, the lower self is suppressed or renounced, in art, the sensuous and the spiritual are reconciled and harmonised. Beauty does not grow by the analytic and the synthetic process of thought, but is a budding and blossoming from within, and when it reaches fruition, it frees us from worldliness and vulgarity, transfigures our brute and human nature, and overflows as love which is sharable by all. Art softens and refines the animal inclinations of man, and, in the end, spiritualises their content. It functions in the sphere of sense in order that man may be released from sensuousness. Beauty reconciles matter and spirit, harmonises the head and the heart, and bridges earth and heaven.

CHAPTER II

THE STANDARDS OF AESTHETIC CRITICISM

THE appreciation of beauty is common to all rational beings. Everyone is capable of enjoying beauty, but not all can give a reason for their enjoyment. The view, that there is an aesthetic sense in us like the moral sense, by which we immediately appreciate beauty, has already been refuted on the ground that it assumes an inexplicable, mysterious faculty. The variation in the aesthetic judgments of different individuals on the same object would also disprove it. Aesthetic experience is a judgment, which admits of criticism, and involves therefore the distinction between the beautiful and the ugly. The problem of aesthetic culture involves also the study of beauty that is intrinsically valuable. Aesthetic criticism recognises also the distinction between the creative artist who exercises his imagination and the critic who employs his reason. But, in the higher regions of art criticism, creative imagination plays as important a part as critical intelligence.

Aesthetic appreciation is a process of self-criticism in which the critic or the connoisseur elicits the

standards that are implicit in the experience. The connoisseur experiences the difference, himself. In estimating the beauty of a work of art, we formulate certain criteria or standards of judgment, and examine the artist's creation in their light. The standards or principles employed in determining the aesthetic value vary with critics, thus giving colour to the proverbial remark: 'Tastes differ'. On this ground, the impressionist holds that criticism is a re-creation of the artist's vision in the mind of the critic, and is therefore a subjective self-expression varying with individuals. The scientist, on the other hand, seeks an objective principle of evaluation which would be permanent and universal. The frequent agreement, occurring in aesthetic judgments of different critics in the light of definite laws, would point to a refutation of the impressionist's view. Judgments of beauty and ugliness imply objectivity and universality, and the principles of criticism are common to all.

Aesthetic judgment should not be coloured by personal or other prejudices. It should not proceed by hard and fast rules derived from other works of art whose design or conception is different. Criticism should be sympathetic, relevant and appropriate. It should take into account the artist's aim, the nature of the materials at his disposal, their fitness for his design and the technical skill displayed by him in making his means serve his end. The critic should avoid the extremes of blind faith in authority on one side and the eccentricity of

subjective pre-possessions on the other. He should consider the aesthetic form, function and content of the work of art, and reflect also on the nature and degree of satisfaction felt in the experience of beauty.

Among the essentials of criticism may be mentioned the following : the knowledge of the technique employed by the artist, cultural sympathy and a disinterested endeavour to know the best that has been thought and said on the subject, based on clarity of vision, selection and discrimination. Appreciation is the flower of culture, and it steers a middle course between the pedantry of mere scholarship and the superficiality of the dilettante. The critic should have a sense of perspective and proportion avoiding dogmatism as well as dilettantism. He should seek to enter sympathetically into the art impulse of the artist at the moment of his impulsion, and evaluate the work by considering the intensity with which the impulse is conveyed in it. The criticism of art presupposes a knowledge that it is not mere intelligence or instinct, but an artistic intuition that is the fulfilment of the aesthetic experience. The highest beauty can be best criticised by experiencing it first in ourselves and then trying to interpret its effect on ourselves, to others, so that they may also share the experience.

REALISM

The realist in art insists on the pursuit of truth and the portraying of things as they are. The rigorous realist aims at the faithful representation of nature in

all her nudity, and abstains from any attempt to make her appear more beautiful or less ugly. He scrupulously rejects all ornamentation, and strives to give a truthful rendering of nature and life. He takes no interest in the imaginative creation of an ideal beauty for which no counterpart could be found in nature or life. Realistic beauty is not created by the artistic imagination, but is the result of a faithful rendering of the beauty already existing in the world. A thing is beautiful if it imitates nature. When the realist says that a picture or poem is beautiful, he means that it is a close and true rendering of things as they are. The degree of the beauty or excellence of the artistic product should be assessed in terms of the beauty of the object imitated and also the skill with which its beauty is faithfully portrayed. The realist has thus a passion for fidelity to nature, and art is to him an imitation of things that are beautiful. Ugly things too may be depicted in their sordidness, and the artist's excellence will have to be judged by the degree of truth in the rendering. If the realistic view of art is pushed to its logical conclusion, art concerns itself best with copying nature as she is. The artist, for example, represents the beauty of nature when he portrays the rising sun, the shining sea and the blossoming lotus. The realist is thus a naturalist. The naturalist is unabashed in treating life, human or sub-human, in its truest colours, omitting nothing that seems ugly or sordid. He does not shrink from rendering the animal side of man or of woman. No consideration of prudishness would deter him from

revealing all that is in nature or in human nature. To the naturalist or the realist in general, the pleasure that is afforded by art is the satisfaction of the instinct of imitation. Man, as Aristotle says, is more imitative than the other animals, and takes a conscious delight in imitation. According to Alexander, who may be looked upon as a typical exponent of the realistic view, beauty belongs to the beautiful object, and the mind only participates in its expressiveness. But he speaks of the paradox of beauty that its expressiveness belongs to the beautiful thing itself, and yet would not be there except for the mind. Literal beauty may satisfy the scientific, and not the aesthetic, sense.

But the realistic view, in its extreme form, is not true to aesthetic experience. Even the closest realist does not servilely copy or mirror nature, but is often influenced by psychological considerations. He selects what he considers typical or characteristic out of a mass of irrelevant details afforded by nature and, with the help of his imagination, re-arranges them into an idealised portrait. But for this activity of the idealising imagination, no copying from nature or life would, however faithful it may be, attain to the rank of art. Even the poet or dramatist, who chooses his material from history, does not represent what actually happened just as it did, but reflects on his material, rejects what is inappropriate to his artistic design, selects what is relevant, significant or typical, re-groups and re-shapes characters and incidents in the light of his imaginative design. This is what Aristotle meant by art imitating

nature and also by the statement that poetry is universal while history is particular. Further, the theory of faithful copying does not account for the splendid inventions of beauty found in the works of poets or painters that represent what is nowhere in the actual world. It would deny the claim of beauty to such artistic masterpieces as the "Ancient Mariner" or "Christabel" or the sculptures of Centaurs, dragons and the like which admittedly give artistic delight to a large number of competent critics.

Plato, while holding that art imitates nature and life, states that the objects of nature and of the world of life are but appearances of reality. Art would thus be an imitation not of reality but of the appearance of reality. His view of art is a kind of illusion theory. According to the latter, a thing is beautiful if it produces an illusion. Man has, according to his theory, an instinct for self-deception, and art satisfies this instinct. The illusion is often more attractive to him than the reality itself. Plato also distinguishes between fake art and true art. The fake artist is a mere imitator, who may represent anything like the roll of thunder and the rattle of wind, and will bark like a dog, crow like a cock and bleat like a sheep, and he was to be banished from the ideal state. But the true artist is inspired, and has a vision of the finer forms of reality. The objectification of beauty would lead to caricature, and does not provide matter for non-representative art based on introspection. The imitation theory extols mimicry, vulgarises art, and makes an appeal to the satirist. The artist, who seeks

to imitate the beauties of nature, performs only a conjuring trick. But the wise artist seeks to attain the one Beauty that is supersensible though it may shine through sight.

IDEALISM IN ART

The artist of the idealistic school repudiates the realistic theory of the beautiful. Beauty, according to him, is not a quality of the object, which the poet or the painter renders faithfully, but a mental construction or imaginative creation of the artist. The creative idealist aims at expressing in his artistic work the highest beauty that can be conceived of as possible in the world of nature or human life. True nature lives in our nature, and is idealised. Art is the informing spirit of matter, and makes it alive and responsive. As Croce says, it is not the past participle but the active voice, and it communicates a delicacy and delight to the stuff of matter. The delight of art gushes forth from the vitality of the artist. In a mood of intense creative activity, the master-artist idealises the objects of nature or the thoughts and actions of human beings, and creates new forms and figures projecting into them his own vision of what should be or might be. The seeds of beauty sprout into shape and acquire a moving power not possessed by nature. Nature does not reveal beauty at its best. The splendour of the artistic creation is more golden than gold itself. Musical harmony cannot be interpreted in terms of physical changes occurring according to mathematical laws. The spiritual ear is

different from the material ear, and is attuned to find suggestive and significant meanings not perceived at all by the ordinary ear. It is not the aerial or the ethereal wave that excites the emotion of the inner music or the imaginative picture that sets up the physical wave. Even the scientific mind interested in experimentation has to rely on the theorising activity of thought and disciplined imagination to intuit the secrets of nature. The discovery of a new law is often the flash of genius, which realism fails to explain. The feeling of the artist flows freely, unfettered by causal determination, into the physical materials of his art, transfigures them and imparts a new meaning to them. In Shakespeare's words, the artist's imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. There cannot be a truer description, according to the idealist, of the process of artistic creation than is contained in these words of the great dramatist.

While reason gives only the 'ratios' of things, poetic imagination is, as Blake says, a kind of spiritual sensation or divine vision. True beauty overflows and is not what is measured or moderate. To Shelley, poetry unveils the hidden beauty of life and the poet is a creator like God. The idealist holds that beauty does not lie in the sensible object, but comes from the ideal world. The artist's imagination is, as Wordsworth puts it, a divine vision or faculty that invests all objects with a light that never was on sea or land. Poetic rhythm is a magic of words informed by mysterious feelings

and suggestions, which transport us from the world of facts to the world of imagination and intuition of truth. Music cannot be expressed in words or as thoughts. When the musician pours his soul into the medium, it thrills with melody. It is too etherial to be put in words. As Schopenhaur says, unlike other fine arts, music is itself an idea and not a copy of ideas. The inspiration of the artist or the visitation of the divinity in him arises from intense feeling which does not admit of causal explanation. There is a mystic power in words and in the rhythm of verse which, as Wordsworth says, presents objects to the inner mind in flashes and with a glory not their own. While the ultra-realist stresses external beauty and the ultra-idealist, the mental creation, the true aesthetician avoids the extremes by a blending of the real and the ideal. He combines the idealism of Plato with the realism of Aristotle.

CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM

Corresponding to the distinction between realism and idealism in art and akin in significance to them respectively is the well-known critical difference drawn between classical art and romantic art. The preference for classical or for romantic art is largely a matter of temperament in the artist or the critic. There are some men who find a fascination in following the path of order, of tradition, of established conventions which have acquired their position of importance by centuries of effort. Others there are who show a marked bent for novelty, for what is strange, remote, uncommon or

out of the way. They think the conventions of classical art are too servile and impose too much restraint on originality and individual genius.

Classicism is based on the spirit of restraint and order which avoids eccentricity and extravagance. It believes in the importance of following conventions, as they have been arrived at by a study of the practice of previous generations of great artists. Classical art seeks the universal in experience and moulds its designs in forms of flawless beauty. It is shocked at what is abnormal or morbid in experience and at slovenly excesses and crudities of style. The artist, who is classical by temperament, believes in disciplined imagination and in conformiry to established forms in his art. He has a reverence for authority and the models left by previous artists. Clearness of conception, orderliness of presentation and lucidity of expression are the virtues he aims at. When the classical artist has the breath of genius warming his imagination, his work assumes a flawless perfection combining great thought and faultless execution; but when, without genius, he merely imitates others and follows what is conventional, his work, poem or picture is apt to become cold, lifeless, insipid and unemotional. This is the defect to which classical art is liable.

Romantic art, on the other hand, strives to combine strangeness with beauty. Whatever is uncommon, original, novel, remote, intense and abnormal attracts the romantic temperament in art. The romanticist loves freedom and adventure and delights in exploring

strange regions of thought and emotion, and in expressing his spiritual or imaginative experiences therein through the medium of his art. His is the spirit of individual enterprise and experiment. He loves what is mysterious, hazy and suggestive; the uncommon, mystical, supernatural and even morbid experiences of the soul interest him most, and he detests convention in regard to form or style. He would not conform to authority or tradition in art. Romantic art is thus egocentric both in its choice of material and in the form or style which it shapes for itself. At its worst, romantic art is likely to degnerate into eccentricity and caprice. Laxity of form and frivolity of matter are the pitfalls that lie before it at every step. If classical art becomes formal and lifeless when not inspired by imagination, romantic art is apt to become sentimental and extravagant. Romantic art often escapes from the realities of life and seeks its delight in a world of its own creation—a world of fairies and spirits, Titania and Ariel, of magic and witchcraft, of dragons and hydras. Fiction and phantasy are more interesting to the romantic artists than fact. They escape from the familiar world of history into the realm of the supernatural. They would not be cribbed, cabined and confined within the bounds of the real and the probable, but would pursue the strange and the abnormal. The romantic temper revels in danger, in melancholy and in sombre hues, provided they are uncommon. It is prone to tormenting introspection and exaggeration of morbid moods when it becomes, in Goethe's words, a disease as against the health and sanity of the classical temper.

Classicism and romanticism are complementary, representing, as they do, two equally necessary attitudes, *viz.*, loyalty and freedom. They form, as it were, the systole and the diastole of aesthetic life. Blind loyalty to authority is servility and is against the progress of art. Similarly, blind revolt against tradition or convention is undesirable and crotchety. The rebel may rebel against himself, becoming self-destructive. The stability of classicism should be enriched by the spontaneity of romanticism, so that art may attain both progress and perfection. This ideal combination is met with in great masterpieces like the "Odyssey" and the "Oedipus Rex." Feeling is shaped by idea and idea is enriched by feeling.

One of the definitions given in the "Foundation of Aesthetic" by Odgen, and by others is that anything is beautiful which is the work of genius. The artistic genius has a divine vision of beauty or a flash of inspiration which cannot be accounted for by the logical intellect. Thus Bergson says. "From time to time, men are born (by happy chance) who are not bound by the treadmill of practical life." What the artist gives is a direct vision of beauty. But Bergson errs in thinking that nature reveals reality to certain privileged persons at long intervals. Genius is rare, but is not the monopoly of the privileged few. What is possible to some is possible to all, and, as the mystics say, everyone has a genius for intuiting the Beautiful which lives in and impels all thinking things and objects of thought.

Impressionism is a form of naturaiism in which the artist's mind passively takes in the phenomena of nature

or life, and portrays them as they are. Expressionism is opposed to this attitude. The expressionist will pass the crude ore of experience through the crucible of his fiery imagination, and fuse it into new forms of beauty by colouring it with the hues of his own personality. He projects himself into what he creates, and is, as it were, the mystic in art.

DOES BEAUTY LIE IN FORM OR IN CONTENT?

Critics of art range themselves on opposite sides on the question of the relative importance of form and matter in regard to aesthetic beauty. Bosanquet thinks that beauty is the informing spirit of matter, which makes it alive and helps it to spring into magic shapes. Matter in art differs from matter in science; the stuff of matter in regard to art is not the passive, inert substance that the scientist deals with; it is a plastic medium responding to the spirit and design of the artist. The idea of inert mass is the "killed and stuffed" version of the scientist's matter. However great the matter or idea behind a work of art, it cannot become artistic or beautiful unless the form given to it is adequate. It is lean idealism to think of beauty as purely mental or subjective. The psychologist and the poet may both treat of the same subject—the moods, emotions, and thoughts of man's soul; but the work of the former can never be artistic for want of the beauty of form and style. Form, in its widest sense, is the soul of art which transforms the medium and makes it throb with life and thrill with joy. The word form, in

this sense, is not mere style, technical or mechanical skill: it refers to the imaginative shape or design that the artist conceives of in his mind while working at his material as being the most suitable for the expression of his idea. Body becomes alive and turns spirit. When the spirit of the sculptor incarnates into stone, it springs into life, and becomes a speaking beauty. Beauty sleeps in marble hidden from view and wakes up at the touch of the imaginative artist. The words of the orator trip about him, as Milton says, and are keen and alert to obey his command and stir the emotion that he intends to evoke. Bradley holds, therefore, that form alone counts in poetry and not matter. It must be recognised that, however graceful and flawless the form or style may be, a poem or a picture can never be great unless the theme or idea in the artist's mind is of supreme greatness. It is the happy combination of a great theme and a grand style that makes such works as the "Paradise Lost" and "King Lear" masterpieces of great art.

Hegel says that beauty is the presentation of reality in sensuous form. It is, therefore, the lowest form of the concrete idea. Beauty is, according to him, the synthesis of the abstract idea and the material given in sense-knowledge. In poetry, as the highest form of art, art is released from its sensuous embodiment. Hegel holds that form and content are separable. But the medium is not an impediment to artistic expression. It makes its own contribution to the beauty of the artistic creation by imparting qualities peculiar to it and thus enriching its value.

Bosanquet's view of the relation between material and form is entirely different from that of Hegel. According to Bosanquet, there is no form without matter. Form is correlative to matter and not foreign to it; mere form without matter atrophies aesthetic experience. The matter chosen by the artist suggests the appropriate form which alone would adequately express it. Form, therefore, varies with matter, as aesthetic feeling has to find its proper embodiment. Beauty arises when feeling finds a shape for itself through a plastic medium. It is in determining the form or shape that is most suitable to his idea or feeling that the artist displays his treative imagination. Form is thus the body and not the vesture of the matter represented in art. Without the body, there cannot be the soul. The soul of a thing is its body spiritualised. In poetry, the sensuous medium or body is the significant sound or word. In painting, it is the stroke of the bursh or pencil. The vibration of the strings is the body wherein the soul of melody reveals itself in the *vina*. The artist's medium is not the heavy stuff and dead matter which clog the soul. It has an affinity to the mind and is, in fact, an element in a felt whole. Matter and form co-operate with each other like soul and body and create a living shape for themselves at the bidding of the artist's imagination. Coleridge defines beauty as the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit reveals itself.

THE HINDU ANALYSIS OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN THE WRITINGS ON POETICS OR *ALANKARA SASTRA*

As early as the second century of the Christian era the Hindus had made a critical study of artistic experience. Their propensity to introspection enabled them to investigate the psychological condition of the artist in his creative mood and of the critic or connoisseur while enjoying the work of art. Bharata, in his classical treatise called "Natya Sastra", classified aesthetic experience into several groups and showed also how the poet, musician or dancer evoked these experiences with the help of his artistic medium.

Poetry is the outpouring of beauty in rhythmic language. There is a magic in words which constitutes the soul of poesy. Poetry is therefore defined as *vakyam rasatmakam kavyam* (words embodying a spiritual experience). This spiritual experience or *rasa* is the *atman* or soul of poetry. Poetic pleasure is pleasure *par excellence*. It results from the subtle fusion of thought and the music of words, and is not emotion recollected in tranquillity without any glow. Literature or poetry gives artistic expression to the joy of beauty aroused in responsive minds by the sights of nature or the contemplation of human life and its vicissitudes. Since poetry has a dual aspect of thought or emotion on one side and form and language on the other, the literary critic has a twofold standard in analysing aesthetic or poetic experience, *rasa* and *dhvani*, the spiritual experience enshrined in the poem and the suggestive or signi-

ficant expression that reveals it. The poet or *kavi* is a *tatvadarsin* or seer of truth. He intuits truth in a mood of inspiration and clothes it in a beautiful form. *Rasa* is a condition of spiritual exaltation resulting from a study in a work of art of three accessory or contributory factors, *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicaribhava*. *Vibhava* is the representation of the specific stimuli capable of evoking the emotional state concerned in the poem, such as, in the case of *srngara rasa*, youthful lovers, the spring season and the song of birds. *Anubhava* is the description or depiction of the bodily expression that manifests the emotion—smiles, sobs, archness of speech and the like. *Vyabhicaribhava* is the secondary or subservient emotion that contributes its share to the development of the dominant or stable emotion which is called *sthayibhava*. It is this dominant passion or emotion—love, heroism, humour or pathos—that is afterwards transformed in the mind or soul into the corresponding *rasa* or spiritual exaltation. Each *rasa* is *sui generis* and has its own characteristic appeal. It results, as has been said before, from a skilful representation of the three contributory factors, *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicaribhava*. The blending of these three in the poem culminates in a dominant emotion or *sthayibhava* which is transformed in the soul of the reader into a *rasa*. Thus Bharata and his followers insist on *rasa* or emotional appeal as the soul of poetry.

Bharata classifies the *rasa* into eight : *srngara* or love, *hazya* or humour, *karuna* or pathos, *raudra* or anger, *vira* or heroism, *bhayanaka*, the fearful or terrible, *bhi-*

bhatsa or the grotesque and disgusting, and *adbhuta* or the marvellous. Each *rasa* has its own *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicaribhavas*. To these eight *rasas*, later critics added two more, namely, *santa* or the serenity of resignation and philosophic contemplation, and *vatsalya* or affection. *Dhvani* is a quality of style which enhances the beauty of poetry. *Dhvani* in style aims at suggesting rather than stating. A poem or stanza with *dhvani* suggests new meanings not explicitly stated in the words. The words and their arrangements are such as hint at or suggest thoughts and emotions not actually conveyed by them. Suggestiveness or *dhvani* in a poet's style or manner makes us feel that more is meant than meets the ear. It corresponds, therefore, to the overtones in music. *Dhvani* or *vyangyartha* is the magic power of style by which the creative artist enables the intelligent reader to read more into the words than what is explicit in them. It imparts a rare delicacy to the work of art which would become plain and flat by more literal elaboration.

According to Sanskrit critics, art is not a means to an end ; it is an end in itself. While the artisan aims at economic value, the artist delights in intrinsic value or *svayam prayojana*. The primary function of poetry or art in general is the immediate delight or enjoyment of others, *sadyah paranirvrtaye*. Beauty is an inner or immediate necessity and has universal appeal. The *kavi* or poet has *pratibha* or imaginative genius or vision. The medium employed by him is itself idealised and has the glow of poetic thought. Poetic pleasure

is a blend of the cognitive, conative and emotive sides of man and is changed into happiness and bliss. While pleasure is sensuous and happiness mental, bliss is eternally spiritual.

The immortal beauty of the "Ramayana" can only be experienced and not explained by aesthetic standards. Its sweetness, spontaneity, grace and suggestiveness have an insistent appeal to the heart of humanity. The essential quality of all true poetry defies definition and can be stated ultimately to consist in its power to delight the hearts of the sensitive or responsive reader (*sahrdayahrdyahladakatvam.*) The dominant *rasa* of the "Ramayana" is *karuna* or pathos, which is more intuited than defined. The delight of Kalidasa is in depicting *srngara rasa* or the emotion of love as may be seen in his "Sakuntalam" or the "Vikrama Urvasiyam." *Srngara* may be of two kinds: the joys and quarrels of lovers when they enjoy the bliss of each other's company or the griefs of lovers in separation. Love is hetero-sexual and not homo-sexual, and it is the meeting of two refined souls without reservation and the enjoying of the shared experience. In both, Kalidasa stands unsurpassed. Bhavabhuti is powerful in his appeal to the sentiment of pathos or *karuna*, as may be seen in his "Uttara Rama Caritam." He attempts *tira rasa* or the sentiment of heroism in his "Maha Vira Caritam," but not with equal success. The other *rasas* may be seen in other poems or plays and sometimes in a play or poem where the dominant note is love or pathos.

In its rich colouring, in its representation of the joys and sorrows of lovers and in the infinitely varied manifestations of their emotions, *sringara rasa* holds the sceptre, as it were, in the poetic world. In divine comedy there is the innate joy of love. Love develops from *bhava* or the rise of emotion, *hava* or expression through movements of the eye and *hela* or the full manifestation of the emotion and love for love's sake.

Adbhuta rasa is the feeling of sublimity, grandeur and awe inspired by the contemplation in poetry, drama or other works of art of what transcends our scientific self-consciousness. The infinite stretch of space and the sweep of time reaching to eternity, the universe of endless expansion—these bewilder the intellect and arouse the emotion of grandeur or awe (*adbhuta*). The sublime is not the emotion of terror, but is due to the overwhelming of the quantitative infinite and spiritual. The birth of Sri Krishna as Divinity Itself strikes humanity with wonder.

THE TRAGIC AND THE COMIC EMOTIONS

The term tragic in Western criticism corresponds to a blending of the *rasas* of *karuna* and *vira* or pathos and heroism. Tragedy in Western literature dwells on conflicts and complications ending in a collapse. The exhibition of accentuated and unmerited suffering heaped on a heroic soul evokes the feeling of tragic terror and pity due to the waste of good in expelling evil. The tragic includes the pathetic, but is not identical with it. Pathetic feeling is responsive sympathy with the suffering of others; but unless the suffering is

reacted to with the nobler qualities of human nature, by the victim, the emotion evoked in the beholder or reader cannot be said to be tragic. Heroic resignation, fortitude, undaunted patience, intense love for others—these and the like qualities are revealed in times of the greatest suffering by the heroes and the heroines of the great tragic masterpieces of the world. In great tragedy, there is a moral or spiritual tension or conflict which brings out the finer qualities of the soul. Antony and Cleopatra, Othello and Desdemona, Antigone and Alcestis are tragic figures in the higher sense of the word tragic. Sakuntala in Kalidasa's play and Sita in the 'Uttara Rama Charitam" are their counterparts in Hindu literature. The self-suffering of Sita in the interests of duty stands unmatched in tragedy for its moving power. It is a sorrow felt with the sufferer and not for the sufferer.

The comic in Western literature and criticism corresponds to the *hasya rasa* of Sanskrit writers on poetics. Comic pleasure results from the representation of the follies, the incongruities and the minorvices of men and women. There is a marked disparity between a fact and its adjustment. Comic pleasure includes humour born of sympathy, satire, sarcasm and irony. Comic humour in which there is an under-current of sympathy with the person laughed at is different from satire or sarcastic humour arising from a sense of superiority or contempt. The former is good-humoured and is evoked by a sense of the ludicrous. It is not inconsistent with the feeling of human kinship and

sympathy. It can, in the hands of great masters, become poetic, whereas the purely satiric form of humour can never attain to the imaginative beauty of the higher kind. To know man is to forgive him.

While Western comedy and tragedy regard life as a plaything of fate or fortune and a waste of virtue, the Hindu theory traces man's fall or folly to his own responsibility, and is based on the spiritual optimism that reality is essentially good and blissful. The comic artist delights not so much in exposing to ridicule the snobberies and stupidities of men in an ironical vein as in laughing them out of existence. Comic relief and tragic tension are often blended together in the masterpieces of great writers in a harmony which leads to a higher aesthetic joy The laughter of a true philosopher is aroused when he thinks of the greatness of the universe and the littleness of man and contrasts the goodness of God beyond the universe with the contradictions and oddities of the world.

THE INTER-RELATION OF DIFFERENT ARTS

The artist, with the help of his imagination, idealises the object, breathes life into his medium and transforms it into a thing of beauty. By his gift of vision, he sees into the inner beauty of nature and of human life and emotion and reveals it to others.

Art is rhythm and the many arts express this rhythm each in its own way, and each art has its own medium. They have been classified into representa-

tional arts like sculpture, poetry and painting and non-representational arts like music and architecture. They have also been divided into spatial arts like painting, sculpture and architecture and temporal arts like literature and music, though extension and duration may be the elements of all arts. Architecture represents the effort of man to embody static stability or eternal order through the medium of space. Beauty arises in architecture by the exhibition of vastness, symmetry and ornament. Sculpture depicts the type which is seen through the geometrical imagination. The rhythm in painting involves the inter-glow of lines and colours and embodies the artist's vision in two-dimensional space. In poetry and music, sound becomes the aesthetic medium. Poetry is the magic of words and communicates the inner charm of the soul through the medium of verbal rhythm or metrical music. It is a blending of sound and sense and is universal art. It frees the mind from the slavery of the actual by participating in the eternal. The poet has idealistic sensitiveness and transmutes an assemblage of words into articulate rapture. Poetry has "spiritual father and corporeal mother". Music is an ethereal expression of the spirit, an inner revelation of melody and harmony expressed through the inner sense of time. While poetry is creative, music is enjoyable. It brings solace to the afflicted mind, exalts love, portrays its varied moods and pulsations alternating between the joys of union and the sorrows of separation. Music lulls the senses and soothes the mind;

it transmutes the vibrations conveyed by the outer ear into unsubstantial but ever ringing inner notes and melodies. In poetry and music, the content is subtle and psychical, and the sensory material or medium is fused with spiritual significance. Music is more ethereal than poetry; it is the food of love and leads to self-forgetfulness. Dance is the rhythmic movement in space and time and is an epitome of the adventures of love. The theme, the tone and the refrain are so designed as to transfigure the supple movement of the body into spiritual significance. Swift movement passes into subdued stillness, and stillness changes in a subtle manner into swiftness, and the varied movements suggest the message of love and its conveyance by the passing cloud, the soaring bird and the like. All arts are organically related and their true aim is the intuitive expression of the infinite through the medium of the finite. The inspired artist looks from nature, the body of beauty, to nature's God who is the soul of beauty, and the Bhagavata is the homeland of Divine Beauty and Suka with his artistic genius intuits it and imparts it to humanity.

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CHAPTER III

THE METAPHYSICS OF THE BEAUTIFUL

LIKE ethics and epistemology, aesthetics is ultimately rooted in metaphysics. The realm of beauty is as autonomous as that of truth and goodness, all the three being essential elements of reality. While it is the task of aesthetics to evaluate the aspects of beauty in individual forms, the philosophy of beauty seeks to bring out the implications of beauty as a harmonious whole, by a critical examination of the various theories in the West and in the East, and harmonise them with the other aspects of experience like the facts of science and the values of life.

The metaphysical aesthetics of the West may be traced to the speculations of the Greek mind which was essentially artistic. Plato and Aristotle considered beauty as an objective reality, and neo-Platonism gave it a transcendental value, the supreme reality being looked upon as having truth, goodness and beauty as its essential attributes. In modern thought, the account of beauty given by empiricists like Hume affords a marked contrast to the rationalistic exposition of think-

ers like Leibnitz. Baumgarten gave a new start to philosophy in 1750 when he called his treatise on Beauty "Aesthetica". As has been said before, it was Kant that first recognised the independent or autonomous value of the beautiful. He defined it, however, subjectively as a construction of the contemplative imagination. The philosopy of aesthetics was formulated in post-Kantian thought like that of Hegel and Schelling. While Hegel and his followers like Bradley and Bosanquet regard art as a phase of theoretic activity, Schelling, the pantheistic idealist, makes it the only organic philosophy and interprets the universe as a great poem. Schopenhaur, the pessimist, explains art as an escape from the weary weight or bondage of life. The true philosophy of art as a rounded system insists on the autonomous nature of aesthetics. Just as there is a logic of pure knowledge and an ethic of pure will, there is an aesthetic of pure feeling.

Hindu aesthetic thought is an attempt to portrary the infinite through the medium of the finite. The experience of *rasa* resulting from a representation of its *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicaribhavas* is, according to Jagannatha and his school, of the same nature as the experience of the realisation of Brahman. Owing to the Hindu genius for synthesis, its theory of the beautiful has been free from the antagonism existing in Western thought between realism and idealism, between romanticism and classicism. It recognises the value of objectivity, the infinite being glimpsed through the finite. It stresses, at the same time, the value of

authority and the spontaneity of inner intuition and overcomes the ugliness of sensual life.

Aesthetic philosophy, in the East as well as in the West, insists on the reality of aesthetic experience or consciousness and on the beauteous nature of reality. The problems that any philosophy of beauty should tackle may now be briefly stated. Is there anything that can be called really beautiful in nature, in the stars, in the flowers, or in the works of men? Or is beauty only a personal impression having no real basis in the objects looked upon as beautiful? Is beauty real or ideal, a quality or value? It is a matter of common experience that tastes differ and that what one man considers beautiful is sometimes treated as ugly by another. Just as there are individual differences in the judgment of beauty and in its appreciation, there have been variations of judgment among different nations and in different ages. What the eighteenth century generally esteemed as beautiful in poetry was condemned as ugly by the century that followed it. Nothing is more surprising than the differences in the appreciation of music. Indian music is mere noise to connoisseurs of Western music. How are we to account for these differences? Is beauty of person, of nature, or of art merely a subjective impression having only a relative value? Are we to apply the principle of relativity in evaluating the beautiful or accept the absoluteness of its value? Or is there anything beautiful in the external object corresponding to the impression in the appreciating mind? Is beauty

absolute? If absolute, in what sense is it absolute? Is the beautiful to be explained as a partial manifestation of beauty in the abstract? Is beauty a single reality of which the human imagination obtains partial glimpses? What is its relation to ugliness? How are we to explain or interpret the latter? We may now study the different ways in which the great thinkers of the world have tackled these and other questions connected with the concept of beauty. The experience of reality as beauty is varied and yet one.

PLATO

Among Western thinkers, the earliest to formulate a philosophical theory of the Beautiful was Plato. In a well-known passage in the "Symposium", the wise man says thus: "When a man has gone deep enough in the lore of love and turned his attention to things of beauty in their due order and has become a master in that school, there shall dawn upon his eyes a vision of surpassing beauty, for whose sake he endured all his former toils; a beauty which in the first place is eternal, without beginning and without end, unbegotten and without decay; and secondly, is not beautiful in one way and ugly in another; not beautiful at one time or place, or from one point of view and then ugly, as if Beauty descended on the beholders; nor again will that beauty to his eyes take on all the likeness of a face or hand, or any other fleshly part, nor of speech or learning, nor will have its being in any other living thing, or in earth or in the heavens, or in any other creature,

but will have its simple and essential being ever one within itself. And of it other beautiful things in such wise partake that, while all they are born and often decay; it neither waxes and wanes, nor suffers any change. So when any one climbs the ladder of true love in this world till he catches a glimpse of that beauty, he has almost attained his good. And this is the true discipline of loving and being loved that a man begins with the beauties of this world and uses them as stepping stones for an increasing journey to other beauty, going from one to two and from two to all, and from beautiful creatures to beautiful lives and from beautiful lives to beautiful truths and from beautiful truths to attaining nothing less than the true knowledge of Beauty itself and so know at last what Beauty is. This is man's true home with his vision of Absolute Beauty, if he have in this life any home at all."

It will be seen from the passage stated above that Plato gives an idealistic interpretation of the beautiful which is almost *Vedantic*. In fact every form of Western idealism derives its inspiration from him. There is, according to Plato, a ladder, as it were, of Beauty which man may climb unceasingly until he reaches the perfection of Beauty or the Idea of Beauty. The ascent is from the beauty of the world to the world of Beauty. In the various objects of the world—nature and man—we see partial, shadowy manifestations of the eternal Beauty which is one and real. The beautiful objects of this world only shadow forth this eternal beauty.

From the beauty of nature and from the beauty of life, we may proceed to a conception of the beauty of truth and thence attain to a realisation of Beauty in itself which is intellectual and super-sensuous. This eternal Beauty is a new vision, not begotten, never changing, immaterial. The beautiful objects of this world are but partial or fragmentary reflections of it.

Plotinus conceived of Beauty almost in the same way as Plato. And to Plotinus, there is an essential and eternal Beauty which is One and which is enthroned in the Yonder. What that Yonder is cannot be explained by the spatial imagery which alone is possible for us. The artist as mystic longs for beauty which has its home in the ineffable One and the attainment of the ecstasy of communion with it. Dean Inge, who might be considered as of the school of Plotinus, holds the Beauty is one of the eternal values of God or Reality in the same way as Truth and Goodness are. The ascetic temper of the middle ages was not quite favourable to the development of aesthetics. From Plato and Plotinus, we may pass on to the modern philosophers among whom the most prominent are Hegel and the Hegelians like Bradley and Bosanquet, Schopenhaur and Schelling.

HEGEL

Hegel's view of aesthetics is in accordance with his panlogical, idealistic theory that Reality is rational. To him beauty is the expression of spirit as concrete idea and not, as Schopenhaur says, a contemplation of

the abstract idea. Reality, as the concrete idea, has three stages, namely, art, religion and philosophy, and is grasped only by reason. As art represents sensible knowledge and not the free absolute spirit, it is the lowest stage in the dialectic process of development. Philosophy as the synthesis of art and religion is a higher stage than art, and therefore supersedes art. Art is the presentation of spiritual reality in sensuous form; it is the sensuous incarnation of a metaphysical content. It has to reconcile in a coherent unity the two sides of spiritual reality which is the subject matter and the sensuous plastic image which is its form. Beauty is the ideal of art as it is the symptom of the presence of spirit and makes the spirit accessible to sense. Art evolves dialectically through the three stages of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. It is the synthesis of the abstract concept and the material given in sense; the content of art is the Idea and its form is the sensuous image. In the dialectic development of the beautiful, the beauty of nature exists only for the perceiving consciousness and it develops into the beauty of art when nature is idealised. There is an ascending scale of beauty; the animal is more beautiful than the plant and the human form is more beautiful than that of the animal or the plant. In the self-expression of the beautiful, there are three successive stages, namely, the symbolic, the classical, and the romantic. In the symbolic stage which is pre-Hellenic and oriental, as in the art form of architecture, the idea is not fully awake, owing to the inadequacy of form

and content. Its mythology does not reveal true beauty, and its primitive pantheism is grotesque. It erects the temple for the god, but does not express the god himself. The second or classical stage represented by sculpture, is anthropomorphic, and reaches in the ideal human form a harmonious expression of spirit. The human form is elevated ro the spiritual level. The world of the soul triumphs over the world of external nature. It is only in the romantic stage or type as expressed in painting, music, and poetry that art becomes self-aware, and transcends itself though it still retains the form. Dialectically speaking, the symbolic is the stage of thesis, the classical is the stage of antithesis and the romantic is the synthesis of the symbolic and the classical. Feeling is the essence of romantic art. Painting, music and poetry embody pure ideality. Music embodies pure ideality even more than painting which requires a material medium. But it is poetry which reaches the realm of spirit, as its true medium is not sound but imagination. In poetry art transcends itself, as it is most ideal. In it, art is released from its sensuous embodiment and it becomes universal art in the three stages of the epic, the lyric and the drama.

According to Hegel, art is a lower revelation of reality, since the absolute spirit can be grasped only by philosophic thought. Art has, therefore, to give place to philosophy into which it vanishes. Hegel's view of art rightly stresses the development of spirit as concrete idea; but it is a serious defect to extend the

dialectic method to the realm of aesthetics and to banish aesthetics ultimately from the realm of philosophy. To say that the triumph of art is the defect of art is to damn it with faint praise and destroy its autonomous character. His view is, therefore, essentially anti-artistic. Art begins, according to him, to disintegrate when it has reached the highest stage in poetry. Thus the fulfilment of art betrays its failure. In the Hegelian view, art reaches beyond itself and merges into philosophy. To portray God by an appeal to sense-perception does not meet the needs of spiritual life. Art passes into religion and religion into philosophy. Philosophy is the synthesis of art and religion. Thus the theory of Hegelian art is an epitaph, as it were, on art itself.

BRADLEY

According to Bradley, the only Reality is experience, and the moment we begin to describe it in the form of a judgment, discrepancies occur between existence and content. When we interpret Reality from the point of view of its relations, we meet with contradictions on all sides. Just like our ethical and logical judgments, the aesthetic judgment also betrays the discrepancy between experience and content. It is true that our experience of beauty has the immediateness characteristic of feeling. But as soon as we begin to interpret this experience and express it in the form of a judgment, we find ourselves face to face with inconsistencies and contradictions. Beauty is generally considered as the self-existent pleasant.

It is said to be self-contained and also pleasant. But if it is pleasant, it must be pleasant for some one. How can it be considered self-contained if its pleasantness is determined by somebody external to it? Its self-existence is thus inconsistent with its pleasantness. Beauty is neither immediate nor harmonious in itself. How is beauty related to truth and goodness? If it excludes them, it is to that extent less real, being only an abstraction from real experience. If we say that the Absolute, which alone is real, is a harmony of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, the differences would lose their distinctions and Beauty would lose its reality in the unified harmony. Since the concept or judgment of beauty bristles with inconsistencies and contradictions, it is only an appearance of Reality and not Reality itself.

When we speak of the beauties of nature, what do we mean? Do we refer to the so-called primary qualities of the natural object like its spatial relations? These are only lifeless constructions of science; they are pure abstractions created by the intellect. If we refer to the so-called secondary qualities like colour, warmth and odour, we have to admit that they are only the sensations aroused in us though they have a more emotional content than the primary qualities. Primary or secondary, they are all mental or subjective interpretations which cannot prove the reality of beauty. From whatever side we view the matter, we find only inconsistencies which force us to the conclusion that beauty is only an appearance or

illusion like any other aspect or quality. All finite things or qualities are only adjectives of Reality and are not themselves real. But this does not mean that beauty or any other appearance is false or non-existent. It exists in Reality along with its opposites or supplementaries transmuted and harmonised into a single reality or experience. If the appearances like beauty are in Reality or the Absolute, the Absolute is its appearances transformed in such a way that their inconsistencies and contradictions are harmonised. The Absolute has ugliness just as it has beauty but the ugliness and the beauty are merged in it into a harmony which contributes to its richness or wealth.

Bradley recognises the ugly as an element of the beautiful. Dark colourings heighten the beauty of bright colours. In the cosmic scheme ugliness heightens beauty. In the Absolute, the ugly and the beautiful are merged and transmuted into a harmony, though it is not always possible to say how. Bradley's view that the beautiful is a mere apprerance fails to do justice to its intrinsic value.

BOSANQUET

While Bradley considers that the absolute transcends the beautiful, Bosanquet holds that form is realised in matter and that the absolute is immanent in the relative. He gives a logical account of aesthetics based on non-contradiction and maintains that the contradictions of beauty and ugliness, like those of truth and error, are finally absorbed in the absolute

He defines beauty as what is aesthetically excellent. Beauty, according to him, is feeling which has become plastic. He is an expressionist and defines the aesthetic attitude as the expression or embodiment of feeling or imaginative vision in concrete media, lines and forms, significant sounds, movements of the body and the like. Expression is, to him, the keyword to a sound aesthetic, and variety should not be sacrificed at the altar of unity. The medium becomes expressive as a result of the artist's creation and form varies with the medium. The artist creates in the medium an embodied feeling. Feeling is thus embodied, and embodiment has feeling. The soul of beauty is the spiritualised medium. For example, in picture and song, there is the look and feel in the transfigured medium. Matter in science is not the same as matter in art. In the former, it has a dead fixity, whereas in the latter it has spiritual affinities as an element in a felt whole, and helps in the full flowering of art.

Beauty may, according to Bosanquet, be classified into easy beauty and difficult and triumphant beauty. Easy beauty is felt in simple forms and patterns like the cube or the square, a simple tune or fragrant rose, and it has a universal appeal. No concentration of the mind or the imagination is necessary for its appreciation. Difficult beauty has intricacy, tension and width which require mental effort or concentration for its proper appreciation. The uncultured mind cannot take in the details of a triumphant or difficult work of art and see how the parts fit in with the whole. The

intricacy of the design or symphony baffles its attention which is superficial and can take in only a simple tune or a small design. The tension of great tragedy and the subtle humour of high comedy are also form of difficult beauty which require, for their appreciation, a cultured imagination having a wide sweep and a deep concentration. Ugliness, so called, is not always ugliness, when the ugly object is expressive. If it is expressive, it embodies feeling and becomes aesthetically excellent or beautiful. It is only when the artist reveals an intention to express a certain feeling and fails to carry it out owing to his inability to master the medium of his art that his work becomes inexpressive and hence aesthetically faulty or ugly. For example, the wrinkled face of an old man with all his experiences engraved, as it were, on the features would be called ugly; but a picture representing it may be beautiful, provided it has become expressive at the hands of the artist. Bosanquet holds that things are beautiful only in so far as they give aesthetic pleasure. He is not clear as to what part hedonism plays in aesthetics. In the highest forms of beauty, the contraries are united and contribute to the harmony of the whole. Bosanquet's theory has the merit of reconciling the claims of form and matter in aesthetic experience in the light of an immanent ideal; but its chief defect is the inclusion of ugliness, however transfigured, in the content of the absolute, and it is also the defect of every form of *bhedabheda* theory.

Bosanquet's eclecticism is evident in his desire to reconcile the principle of form with that of emotional

expressiveness. Like Hegel, Bosanquet gives up the whole case when he describes beauty as a pleasant feeling embodied in an appearance presented to the imagination. Beauty is not, as he thinks, a mere semblance but an essential element of Reality and has eternal value. His theory suffers from the defects of intellectualism and formalism.

SCHOPENHAUR

Schopenhaur's view of the beautiful is coloured by the note of pessimism which characterises his philosophical outlook. According to him, art does not lead to reality, but away from it. Art is a means of escape from the bondage of life to the peace of *nirvana*. It enables us to escape from the will to live and all its consequences, to contemplative vision. Will is the thing in itself and life is only a phenomenon. The will is a blind irrational cosmic striving. The aesthetic experience of beauty is a means of liberation from the particularity and the weary weight of life. Science, as the category of quantity, follows the stream of reason and never attains the goal of peace. The will is tortured by the insatiability of Tantalus. When we free ourselves from the stream of willing, we attain the blessedness of *nirvana*.

The will to live is the root principle of life. It is a selfish and blind impulse and is the cause of all strife and suffering. Happiness is negative. It is not positive joy, but is the temporary deliverance from a want. The moment the wish is attained, satiety results, and then

there is pain. Freedom from this evil can be reached by disinterested aesthetic contemplation on the illusory nature of individuality and by the acquisition of will-lessness which is allied to emotion recollected in tranquillity. In that state the wheel of life is at rest. Art helps in this endeavour to attain will-lessness and serenity.

Art affords only temporary relief from the pessimistic mood that results from the aesthetic contemplation of objects as ideas or eternal essences. In the perception of beauty, there is release from the thraldom of the particular based on the wish to forget. It leads from reality and not to reality. Perfect freedom is attained only when the will to live is denied. Every desire is then extinguished and the self is negated in the stirless state of *nirvana*. It is the blessed state of the saint which is painless, will-less and timeless subject. The *summum bonum* of life is self-effacement and the flight from phenomenal life. The artist as a man of genius forgets himself, and flies from life. Schopenhaur's view is thus purely negative and is no contribution to the Philosophy of the Beautiful.

SCHILLER

Kant refers to the cognitional activity which quickens imagination and understanding and promotes the judgment of taste and harmonious activity. The theory of harmony was further developed by Schiller. He speaks of beauty as the living shape or union of opposing impulses in man known as the sense impulse and the form impulse. This unity of the natural and

the spiritual is the result of an equipoise in which the scales of the balance are poised. Schiller's view was further developed in the speculations of Schelling. The state of equilibrium is not of the nature of inertia, but is the harmonious blending of different impulses.

SCHELLING

Schelling's aesthetic philosophy is diametrically opposed to that of Schopenhaur. Schelling is among the few western philosophers who have recognised the eternal value of beauty. He holds that all nature is alive and has kinship with the spirit of man. He was the first to write on the philosophy of art as a system of transcendental idealism. Aesthetic is to him the general organ of philosophy. He identifies art with beauty and explains art as characteristic beauty and as the fulness of form which slays form. True art represents infinite life, and it is intuition objectified. Beauty synthesises truth and goodness.

Schelling's philosophical attitude is a kind of pantheistic idealism. The universe is, according to him, a great work of art with beauty and harmony as its attributes. Nature is a great poem and is not a mere impediment to the spirit of man. The true artist is, in Schelling's view, a philosopher who has an intuition of the creative freedom of the absolute. He has a vision of the beauty and harmony of the universe around him. The artistic faculty is of the nature of an intuition and

is distinct from the scientific understanding. Art is the only organon of philosophy. Hegel says that Schelling's absolute is the identity of all differences and compares it to night in which all cows are black.

According to Schelling, art is one of the highest forms of mental activity and is nearest to philosophy because it represents the infinite that is objectified. Fancy is an artistic intuition, and is to imagination what intellectual intuition is to reason. Philosophy unites truth, goodness and beauty, and deduces them from their divine source. Art specialises, as it were, in one of these three aspects instead of attempting to unify all the three. Mythology is essential to art, and the gods of mythology are ideas of God in a particular form or aspect. They are aesthetic creations and representations of the infinite in the finite. As a pantheistic idealist he has a vision of the beauty of nature as the artistic creations of the absolute and has affinities with the Hindu artist.

CHAPTER IV

THE VEDANTIC VIEW OF THE BEAUTIFUL

HINDU aesthetic thought is an attempt to portray the infinite through the medium of the finite. It offers, therefore, a contrast to the western ideal of art as the expression of fidelity to nature. Owing to its synthetic genius, it has, on the whole, been free from the antagonisms between naturalism and idealism, and between classicism and romanticism. While the realist seeks to imitate nature and the idealist embodies in art his imaginative constructions, the Hindu artist tries to express, through the medium of sculpture, poetry, music and dance, the beauty 'that never was on sea or land,' or the object-self, or the subject-self. Classicism is formal and dogmatic, and romanticism is relative and variable. The Hindu philosopher recognises the value of objectivity and authority and at the same time points to the need for spontaneous intuition. Art is to the Hindu thinker, the symbolic expression of Reality and its language is suggestive rather than explanatory. Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall symbolises the whole mystery of life, and, if we know all about the little flower, we know the beauty of the whole universe. The cosmic order

is itself a sense-symbol of the symmetry and harmony that pervades all beings as their inner beauty. Hindu sculpture is an eternal reminder of the infinite in terms of the sublime of space and time. Hindu poetry with its imaginative suggestiveness and divine vision soars to the brilliant beauty that is beyond the fair forms of earthly beauty. Hindu music is likewise suggestive of the music and bliss beyond the spheres that emanate from *nadabrahmam*.

That Reality is essentially beautiful and blissful is not an intellectual speculation but the living faith of *Vedantic* aesthetics. It is rooted in the authority of the *Upanishads* and is also verifiable and verified by the aesthetic experience of the *rishis* and other seers who are specialists in the intuition of spiritual and divine beauty. The absolute of philosophy which is the *sat* without a second is *Isvara*, the moral Ruler of the Universe, and *Bhuvanasundara* or the God of Supreme Beauty. Aesthetic *Vedanta* affirms the nature of the *sat* as the *sundara* (the beautiful), defines the good of life as communing with Beauty and enjoying its bliss, and insists on love as the only means of realising this end. It must be said, however, that the *Advaitins*, in general, do not accept the eternal value of the beautiful. Sankara as the exponent of *Advaitic* view demands our attention.

SANKARA AND RAMANUJA

Beauty is, to Sankara, an appearance of Brahman or the Absolute, because the content of beauty is cut loose from existence. Like all other adjectives, beauty

is also an appearance of Reality. Brahman or Reality is *nirguna* or indeterminate and formless. When Sankara is confronted with those passages in the *Upanishads* that describe the aesthetic qualities or attributes of Brahman, he calls them a concession to the ignorant and the empirically-minded. The text in the *Chandogya Upanishad* defining Brahman as the self within the solar orb and within the visual sense, is explained by him as an account of the formless being described as assuming an illusory form to satisfy the devotional needs of the theistic mind. So also, according to Sankara, the passage in which Brahman is defined as the *jyotis* or light that transcends the physical light that we see is a concession to the demands of the theistic temperament. The theist is an anthropomorphist and, owing to his inability to conceive of the formless Absolute which transcends space-time, spatialises it and assigns human and other attributes to it. The god seated in the lotus of the heart is the devotee's god of beauty beyond which he is unable to rise. But this god is less than the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman or Reality. Practical Advaita has affinities with Visishtadvaita. In interpreting the *Upanishadic* passage that Brahman is the golden person in the sun, Ramanuja protests against the *Advaitic* exposition "His eyes are red like the posteriors of the monkey" and reinterprets the text aesthetically into "His eyes are like the lotus which blooms in sun light."

Ramanuja as a *Visishtadvaitin* expounds his system under three heads, namely, *tattva*, *hita*, and *puruhartha*. This method may with profit be adopted in the study of

aesthetics as well. The *tattva* or truth aspect of aesthetic philosophy deals with the nature of Brahman as the supremely beautiful self which is the source of the beauties of nature and of the souls of man. The *hita* or means of realising the beauty of Brahman or *bhuvana-sundara* is the cultivation of love for Brahman which arises as a result of its infinite attractiveness. The *purusartha* or the chief aim of life is the attainment of the eternal bliss or Brahman. In developing his theory of the nature of reality as the beautiful, Ramanuja objects to Sankara's theory of two standpoints, namely, the metaphysical view of *nirguna* Brahman and the theological view of *saguna* Brahman.

According to him, all the texts in the scripturs refer only to a single Brahman who is the whole or the Absolute and is at the same time the home of the eternal values of truth, goodness, and beauty. These attributes are not unreal appearances. The conception of Brahman as the "true" and the "good" meets the requirements of logic and ethics. It is the distinctive theory of Ramanuja and other *Vaisnavite* thinkers that Brahman or the Absolute is also the Beautiful. This is an important feature of the religious consciousness that is ignored by the Semitica Ethiest religions. The aesthetic science of Beauty is, on this view, a philosophy of art consummated in religion. The Absolute of metaphysics is identical with the beautiful God of religion. The artist realises beauty in a sensory medium but does not become sensual or sentimental. In the same way, God is the supreme Artist who derives a joy in His work.

of creation. He realises His Will to beauty by assuming a shining spiritual form in order to make the finite self an image thereof. All existence is thus to be transformed in the cosmic scheme of the great Artist into a world of beauty. The self that, according to the scripture, shines in the solar orb is the omnipresent beauty of Brahman that also shines as the inner beauty within each individual. Brahman, it is true, is beyond all forms, but, in His infinite love, He creates for Himself a spiritual formless form of eternal Beauty to attract the self and enable it to acquire like beauty.

CREATION AS THE *LILA* OF BRAHMAN

Sankara holds that the universe is an illusory projection due to *maya* or cosmic nescience. According to his view, the world is an irrational, sorry scheme without any meaning or significance. Ramanuja stoutly opposes this conception of a meaningless, illusory universe. He maintains that the cosmos is a concord and not a discord. It is a lila of love. It is a living expression of the infinite beauty of God or Brahman. The *Advaitins* consider that God or *Iswara* is Himself the product of nescience, the arch-illusionist who may be looked upon as the first-born of the Absolute which is free from all attributes. The system of *Visistadvaita* as expounded by Ramanuja aims at a refutation of this theory of *Isvara*. His system is also opposed to the view of the deists that the world-order is the evolutionary expression of the omnipotent will of God. To the deist, God is a supernatural Person above

and beyond the universe who has set in motion the evolution of the world for purposes known to Himself. He would thus attribute imperfection to God by assigning a purpose to Him. Ramanuja's view differs from both *Advaitism* and deism. He states that the creation and the destruction of the world are the *lila* or artistic enjoyment of Brahman. According to him, God is neither a mathematician nor a logician but a supreme artist who delights in the rhythmic beauty that He has created. He enjoys the beauties that seem apparently to contradict one another. The universe is the expression of the free and spontaneous artistic activity of God. "Sadvidya", the "Bhumavidya", the "Anandamayadhikarana" and the "Bhagavata" define Brahman as the *sat* without a second, as the Infinite Beauty free from all blemish. The "Bhagavata" calls *Iswara 'bhuvanasundara'*, the supremely beautiful who is eternal and unconditioned bliss. Brahman exists as Absolute Beauty, but delights also in duality. Brahman realises Himself in the art of transforming the world of *cit* and *acit* into the likeness of His own beauty or in what might be called Brahmanisation. Ugliness is the result of our own limitations. If the finite soul frees itself from *avidya, kama* and *karma*, it will attain to a vision of the beauty of creation. Both creation and destruction—*srsti* and *pralaya*—are but modes of the artistic activity of God. The world is, to the seer, a carnival of beauty. *Srsti* or creation is the consequence of the creative urge of self-expression and self-division The Infinite that is formless evolves into the manifold

world of beauty with names and forms (*nama-rupa*). The differentiation of space-time is the eternal interplay between the static and the dynamic aspects of beauty. Bergson's view that the free duration of time is an intuition which is spatialised by the intellect is as one-sided as the static theory of Spinoza.

THE FIVE FORMS OF GOD THE BEAUTIFUL

According to the system of *Visistadvaita* philosophy, God is Supreme Beauty and He has five forms which manifest Beauty. The first is Absolute Beauty which is super-sensuous and supra-rational. *Paramapada* is the homeland of its eternal value. It is nature in its noumenal state or *nityavibhuti* wherein beauty shines without the slightest stain of sensuality, and is experienced as immortal bliss. In that blessed region which is Beyond, matter is free from its mutability, and shines as spaceless space ; and time exists in the form of eternity. In the next stage the Eternal Beauty of *paramapada* becomes the Infinite with a view to beautifying the self. It is now *paramjyotis* or the light of lights where the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars. This *vyuha* form of Beauty is glorified in the *Puranas* as the Sleeping Beauty that reposes in the Milkly ocean of infinity. The Divine Artist is not an arch-illusionist or an extra-cosmic Personality, but is an alchemist that transforms the *jiva* into a shining self by removing its dross of sensuality. The phenomenal world is also the theatre for the play of Beauty. *Isvara* enters into the self as its *antaryamin* or inner enchanter

and dwells in the lotus of the heart of all living beings. The human body is not composed of dust and conceived in iniquity. It is *Brahmapuri* or the city of God, and is a living temple of Divine Beauty. The Alchemist within transmutes the voluptuary and the ascetic into the mystie that contemplates on the Eternal Beauty who shines as his inner Self The fourth stage is that of the *avatars* celebrated with epic and lyric grandeur in the "Ramayana" and the "Bhagavata". Transcendental Beauty is born in human form in order to allure the self and transfigure it into Its own mode. The fifth abode of Beauty is the *arca* in which the Infinite enters into the finite form of an image without losing Its infinity for the purpose of communing with the mystic that longs for contact even in the sphere of sense-perception. *Arca* is not the idealistic projection of creative imagination, nor a symbolic expression of the Infinite, but a permanent incarnation of Divine Beauty. The mystic who has the spiritual eye can intuit the enhanting form, hear the divine song with his inner ear, and commune with the Beauty that speaks. Thus Brahman as Beauty exists as the Eternal in the noumenal realm, the Infinite reposing as the sleeping Beauty in the ocean of milk ; the *antaryamin* or the Indwelling Enchanter, the historic incarnation, and the permauent incarnation. The aesthetic design underlying these five-fold forms is to beaucity the self and transform it into Its own image.

THE MEANS OF SECURING BLISS

Aesthetic philosophy as a mystic view of life is a systematic account of Brahman as the source of beauty and bliss. *Bhuvanasundar* alone is *aanandamaya* (blissful), and love alone can link beauty and bliss. The Divine Artist enchants the *jiva*, melts its egoism in the furnace of love, and transfigures it into His own image. *Vedantic* aesthetics points out the means of transmuting *visayaraga* or the desire for the objects of sense and sensibility into *paramatmaraga* or the love of God. *Avidya*, *karma* and *kama* are the threefold impediments in the way of attaining Brahmananda. Just as metaphysics offers a solution for dispelling *avidya*, by the way of *Brahmajnama*, and just as ethics insists on transforming *karma* or action into *Brahmananda* or service, aesthetics provides the discihline by which *visayakama* can be changed into *bhagavatkama* (the love of God). Desire by itself is non-moral, and its value depends on its direction and use. *Visayakama* is clamant and chaotic. It makes the mind a slave to the allurement of sensual beauty and subjects it to the ugliness of animal enjoyment. But by obtaining sovereignty over the animal inclinations, the *jiva* can realise itself and blossom into a beautiful soul. Thus *visayakama* can be transformed into *atmakama* or the love of *atman*. The next stage is the further transformation of *atmakama* into *bhagavatkama* when the animal instincts are transmuted finally into the instinct for the infinite love of God. The instincts cannot and should not be repressed; they have to be disciplined and sublimated until they develop into a mystic craving for the beauty

of God. *Kama* is the creative urge of life; it may give rise to bondage or release an uplifting divine energy. Just as the destructive energies of the great falls of Sivasamudram have been controlled, transformed and harnessed for beautifying cities and temples and making Brindavan in Mysore State a beauty spot, the violent instincts, which are bestial, should be spiritualised and directed Godward. They should develop into a craving of the soul for the beauty of God, and become an infinite craving for the Infinite, which the Infinite alone satisfies.

The aesthetic philosopher who contemplates the beauty of Brahman becomes a mystic when he is drawn by it and thirsts for the bliss of communion with it. According to the *talkratunyaya* quoted by the author of the *Sutras*, what a man meditates on, that he becomes Ultimately the metaphysician, the moralist and the mystic reach the same goal of immortal bliss, although their methods may be coloured by the psychological conditions of the *adhikari* who is the seeker after God. Mysticism, as aesthetic religion, utilises the emotions of fear, anger, wonder, and sex, and by sublimating and spiritualising them, removes their dross and ugliness, and directs them Godward, Religious aesthetics thus steers clear of sensuality on one side and ascetism on the other. Feeling furnishes the dynamic force of the religious consciousness. Repression is as fatal to religion as voluptuousness. Wisdom consists, therefore, in educating the instincts and giving them a spiritual direction. The "Bhagavata" as the homeland of the religion of

mysticism *per excellence* offers hope even to the sinner and to the *asuri* or demoniac type of men who deny and defy the rule of divine love. It reconciles metaphysics, morals and mysticism and identifies logic with love. It proclaims the gospel of hope for all, when it assures us that those who ceaselessly direct to Hari their sexual passion (*kama*), hatred (*krodha*), fear (*bhaya*), friendship (*sneha*) and love (*bhakti*) become one with Him (*tanmaya*) and attain *sayujya* (X. xxix. 15). The evil in them is destroyed by Hari. In the alchemy of *Karnayoga* even blemishes are transmuted into good, and the *jiva* is rendered into the likeness of Brahman. The instincts are different forms of the same instinct, *viz.*, the instinct for the infririte life, which has suffered a lapse, since human life is a descent from God who is our Home. Fear is a root-force of life, and seeks to prevent danger to it without aggression. By clinging, like Markandeya, to tne eternal, it helps the *jiva* to become eternal. Anger is aggressive and enjoys the infliction of pain. But the love of revenge and cruelty for their own sake is sterile and self-destructive, and is, as in the case of Sisupala, consumed by the love of Krsna and lost in it. The sexual appetite arises from the divine creative art of self-division into the male and the female, and its straining ceases only when there are reunion and repose. When instinct develops into desire, it has the two sides of joy and sorrow. Joy is satisfaction with the present, and sorrow is dissatisfaction with it followed by a striving towards a better state and a prospective joy. Desire finally develops into

love and longing for re-union with the Infinite which alone is the true goal of life. In this manner, every animal instinct is sublimated into a human desire and transformed ultimately into *bhakti*. Every form of attraction has its origin in the absolute beauty of Krishna and it is this instinct for Krishna that accounts for the origin of the species and also its end.

LOVE

The *Vedantic* interpretation of love is well brought out in the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi in the *Maitreyi Brahmana* of the *Brihadaranyakopanishad*, and more clearly stated in the *Vakyanvayadhikarana* of the *Vedanta Sutras*. On the eve of his retirement from family life, Yajnavalkya offers half of his property to Maitreyi: but she declines it saying that, even if the whole earth with all its wealth belonged to her, she would not feel happy. She, therefore, seeks the way of gaining immortality. It is of no value to one to gain the whole world and lose one's soul. Yajnavalkya then utters to her the following immortal words: "Verily, the husband is not dear that you may love the husband, but that you may love the self. All things (including economic goods and relatives, human and celestial) are dear that you may love the self. The self alone is eternal and only by realising it will you attain immortal bliss." The author of the *Sutras* sets aside the *prima facie* view of the *Sankhya* that the *Upanishad* here refers to the *jiva* by the term

'self', and affirms that the whole section refers to the Supreme Self which constitutes the self of all. Immortality consists in absolute bliss. To the finite self Brahman alone is absolutely dear. The love of finite beings is limited by time, place, nature and degree, and is, therefore, contingent and perishing. The man that is free from *avidya* knows that Brahman animates the whole world without being affected by its imperfections and that Brahman alone is blissful and bestows bliss on all finite beings. Human love is not an illusion or make-believe, but is only a fractional expression of the infinite love of Brahman. By absolute devotion to Brahman, it can be spiritualised. It will then become an irrepressible longing for the joy of communion with the Supreme Self. Among the four ends of conduct known as *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*, the first three are based on ethics, economics and psychology, and the aim of conduct is, according to them, the enjoyment of the pleasures of life here and after death, in *Svarga*, The last end is called *moksha* or *apavarga* and consists in the attainment of the immortal bliss of Brahman. The first three aims are said to be worldly or secular (*pravrtti marga*), while the fourth is the path of renunciation (*nivrtti marga*). Love as *bhakti* has the supreme merit of bridging the gulf between the secular and the spiritual. *Bhakti* or *prema* is the ladder of love between earth and heaven. It enables man to ascend to the immortality of *mukti*, and the Lord to descend into humanity and deify the *jiva* by transforming it into His own likeness. Love is two-sided but one

pointed. The soul-hunger of God exceeds the God-hunger of the soul and the hunger is satisfied when they meet and are oned for ever. Every man has Divine destiny and he drifts by his devotion into divinity. Beauty thus leads to love and bliss and beautifies the self. The animal instinct of lust is really the instinct for the infinite and it can be humanised and divinised.

CHAPTER V

THE BLISS OF BRAHMAN

THE enquiry into the nature of the beautiful and the disciplines described so far find their fruition in the attainment of Brahman as the blissful. The classical exposition of this bliss is contained in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. The author of the *Vedanta Sutras* following this *Sruti* justifies the view that the term *anandamaya* in the text connotes Brahman and not *pradhana* (matter) or the *jiva*. Sankara agrees with him in thinking that the word does not refer to *pradhana* or the *jiva*. But, in accordance wfth his theory of two Brahmans, Sankara is of opinion that *anandamaya* could refer only to *saguna* Brahman and not to *nirguna* Brahman. He defends his view in three ways. Firstly, the whole section or topic refers to the Absolute that is beyond relational thought. When the *Upanishad* attempts a calculus and fails to describe the bliss of Brahman, it admits the inadequacy of the logical intellect to apprehend the nature of the Absolute that is *niravayava* (formless) and *nirguna* (attributeless). The term 'bliss' refers to a self-realised state; at the same time it is an object of experience. It is therefore self-contradictory and is a mere appearance of Reality. In every act of predication, thought seeks to know Reality, but fails in

its attempt. Thought, therefore, can never know Reality. Secondly, *anandamaya* cannot refer to *nirguna* Brahman or the Absolute, as the suffix *mayat* implies *vikara* or modification, as when we speak of *annamaya*, *pranamaya* and *manomaya*. Whatever is capable of modification or is a mode would be a defect of Reality. The causal relation applies only to phenomenal knowledge and not to Reality as it is. The term is a limiting concept and cannot therefore be applied to Brahman that is infinite. Thirdly, the suffix *mayat* is said to imply only maximum bliss and not unconditioned bliss. It could, therefore, refer only to *saguna* Brahman, as this alone has a balance of pleasure over pain. *Nirguna* Brahman is beyond thought. The moment we think it, non-being would enter into its nature. *Saguna* Brahman has maximum being and pleasure and minimum non-being and pain. The term *pracuryat* (abundance) employed in the *Sutra* brings out this truth. *Nirguna* Brahman is the intuitional highest and *saguna* Brahman is the logical highest or, in other words, the highest conceptual reading of Reality. Sankara thus establishes his theory of two Brahmans and says that the author of the *Sutras* is only on the logical level when he defines Brahman as *anandamaya*. The Absolute is beyond the distinctions of bliss and sorrow, as these refer only to empirical life. Sense pleasures, mental happiness and even poetic ecstasy are fleeting expressions of Brahmananda. *Nirguna* Brahman is identical with bliss, and the adjectival theory is a distortion of Reality, as it admits *vikara* or modification as an element of the Absolute. But

practical Advaita is a trans-mutation of values as it identifies the Absolute as the God of religion or Govinda. The criticism levelled against Sankara's theory by Bhaskara, the *Bhedabhedavadin*, is a classical exposition of the opposite point of view, and has been adopted by almost all later *Vedantins*. Bhaskara's arguments may be stated briefly as follows: "If the Absolute transcends all relational thought, then even the *Veda* would have no validity. The *Sruti* and the *Sutras* proceed along the *a priori* road that Brahman is knowable, and that the knower of Brahman attains the highest end of life. *Vedanta* would be stultified if this *a priori* principle of its philosophy were not accepted, and scepticism would be the inevitable conclusion. Brahman can be intuited by the mind when it is freed from the shackles of *karma* and purified. Secondly the term *anandamaya* brings out the fulness of bliss and does not refer to bare being without any positive content. If predication is a perversion of reality, there would be no theory of *nirguna* Brahman or the identity philosophy of bliss. *Ananda* would then be mere cessation of sorrow or bare negation and would lapse into the unconscious. Thirdly Sankara is wrong in holding that *anandamaya* means maximum joy but with an admixture of evil. The aim of the whole section or topic is to establish the highest value of *Brahmananda* and not to sublate it." In a philosophy, which denies the validity of valuation, there is no scope for aesthetics. If art is an imitation of reality and is at best only a self-deceptive make-belive, *Brahmananda* becomes illusory also like reflected light. The ecstasy of communion with

saguna Brahman would only be like the moon's effulgence when contrasted with the solar light of *nirguna* Brahman. The *ananda* of *saguna* Brahman is coloured and stained, as it were, by *avidya*, and it could become pure only if it transcended the limitations of aesthetic imagination, when the blissful Brahman would be lost and negated in the Absolute. A philosophy that seeks the aid of logic, ethics and aesthetics in constructing its system and then destroys such aids is not a safe guide capable of leading the *mumukshu* from the empirical and the ephemeral values of sense pleasures and intellectual and spiritual happiness to the eternal values of *Brahmajnana* and *Brahmananda*. The *Upanishad* does adopt a real scale of values, contrasts the infinite bliss of Brahman with the infinitesimal values of sense pleasures and extols the former as the supreme end of *Vedantic* experience. The higher fulfils the lower and does not sublate it and the highest conserves all eternal values.

The other *Upanishads* are equally emphatic in affirming the bliss that results from the intuition of infinite beauty as they are in declaring that Brahman is absolutely blissful. The *Taittiriya Upanishad*, for instance, states that all living beings are born in *ananda*, live, move and have their being in *ananda*, and enter into it at death. It proceeds further and defines Brahman as *anandamaya*. The *Bhumavidya* also concludes by saying that Brahman is *bhuman* or infinite bliss. The *Madhuvidya* is also a *Brahmopanishad* and explains the nectar of the sun extracted by the

Devas or gods as the bliss of Brahman, whtch is also the Light of lights. The Self within the eye is stated to be Brahman, the beautiful and the blissful. He is *bhamani*, the luminous self that shines in all the worlds and *vamani* that bestows all boons or blessings. The *Mundaka Upanishad* describes the glory of the *mukta* or liberated soul in the following words: "When the seer is gifted with the vision of the splendour of his Maker, he becomes wise and shakes off the effects of both good and evil. His doubts are all resolved and says he shines forth full of bliss." The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* goes further and says: "As a man embraced by his beloved wife knows nothing that is without and nothing that is within, so this self when embraced by the intelligent *prajna* or Self knows nothing that is without and nothing that is within." But this is only an analogy sound as far as it goes. The *Taittiriya Upanishad*, as stated already, attempts a calculus of pleasures in all the worlds, human and celestial, and concludes that the supreme end to be striven for is the bliss of Brahman which is unconditioned and absolute. It cannot be adequately described in words, nor can it be adequately conceived of even by the mind. The scale of *ananda* begins with that of the young man who has a strong will and has the whole world as his wealth, then ascends step by step to the bliss of the Devas, the Gandharvas, and Prajapati or the Creator, and finally concludes with the bliss of Brahman. In that state of *avibhaga* only separateness goes but not distinction. He who realises *Brahmananda* which is beyond speech and thought fears nothing and has attained the supreme object of existence.

THE THEORY OF *BRAHMARASA*

The enjoyment of the bliss of Brahman is called *Brahmarasa* in the *Upanishad*. Beauty is the expression of an intuition, and without a medium it loses its soul. The artist in a mood of inspiration catches a glimpse of the beauty of Brahman or *Syamasundara*, and his work of art is an outpouring of his mystic ecstasy. The bliss of Brahman is the bliss that is Brahman. Poetry has the closest affinity to mystic experience, and the poet who has a soul-sight of divine Beauty communicates, by the magic of his words, his inner vision to the *sahrdayas* or responsive minds and induces the same exalted mood in them. *Rasa* or enjoyment is the essence of poesy and is an agreeable aesthetic feeling that accompanies a specific *bhava* or mood. *Rasa* is the feel of a ruling mood or *sthayibhava*. It is not the feeling tone of a sensation or sentiment, but is an inner spiritual enjoyment. Each *rasa* is *sui generis* with its own feeling state. Being self-creative, its joy is ever expansive and fecund. Owing to its suggestiveness, delicacy and sweetness, it has an abiding influence on aesthetic religion, and, in its transmuted state, it contributes to the riches of all-inclusive harmony. Classical examples of the more important *rasas* in the spiritualised form are furnished by the aesthetic literature of Hinduism, and they bring to light the diverse ways in which the God of aesthetics plays with the devotee and the *rasika*. The infinity of *Isvara* in contrast with the infinitesimal nature of the *jiva* arouses a feeling of reverence. The vision of *visvarupa* or the

cosmic form of *Isvara* granted by Sri Krishna to Arjuna is an instance of the moods of sublimity and fear (*adbhuta* and *bhayanaka*). Arjuna, the mighty hero of the "Mahabharata", is stunned and stupefied when he witnesses the real Actor behind the cosmic drama and craves for love and fellowship.

There is a cosmic joy or pleasure in the contemplation of the incongruities of life and its Creator. This pleasure is opposed to the serious view of theism and to the creature-feeling on the one hand and the monistic recognition of the riddles of existence on the other. Nammalvar, the prince of philosopher-artists, reflects on the self-contradictions of the world-stage (*lilavibhuti*) known as *viruddhavibhuti* and on the eternal beauty of the *nityavibhuti*, and seeks to laugh them away in a mood of artistic humour. He laughs at the follies of life with the *Mayin* behind the scenes and seeks to retire from the scene. *Karunarasa* is the key-note of the "Ramayana". The perennial poetic delight of this great work had its origin in the divine pity of the *rishi* for the heron killed by the hunter and its mate bereaved thereby. *Srngara-rasa* is the joy of revelling in conjugal love as represented in the "Sakuntalam" and is regarded as the *rasa par excellence*. Sex is the master-device of nature to bring together two souls. The *Upanishad* traces creation to the joy of the self-duplication of the Primal Being into the male and the female principles of life in the art of creation. The concept of *Siva-sakti* is derived from this basic truth. "Kama Sastra" or the science of

erotics aims at aesthetic education, which consists in transforming an animal instinct into human love and bringing about the harmony of two souls or their at-one-ment. While every living being has the sexual urge, man alone is conscious of it and capable of judgment and self-criticism. At first, he explains it in terms of biology and sexual selection, then idealistically as the meeting of two souls, and finally in terms of mysticism as the symbol of the spiritual marriage between the Lord and the *jiva*. In this way the mystic view supersedes the biological and falls into line with the *a priori* road to *bhakti*. Just as *karma* as a causal law is reinterpreted in terms of the ethics of *nishkamakarma* (disinterested action) and then in terms of the religion of *kainkarya* or service, *kama* as a vital impulse is transformed into the ethics of *kama sastra* dealing with the love of *pati-patni* (the husband and the wife) and finally into the mystic religion of spiritual wedding or *atma-vivaha*. *Kama* is the human reading of this mystic love. Its value increases with fidelity and naturalness. From this point of view, *srngara* has the highest intuition-expression on the human level of *bhagavat-kama* and its language is largely used as a symbol of the mystic quest. There are two moments in the dialetic development of love called *vislesha* (separation) and *samslesha* (union) or love in absence and love in presence, and this has more value than the Hegelian dialectics dealing with the unity of opposites. There is more joy in *samslesha* than in synthesis, and its mystic Krishna is the ideal of *srngararasa* turned into spiritual love, and He is therefore called in the "Bhagavata"

Manmatha-manmatha. The *upasaka* or devotee that contemplates on Brahman becomes the God-intoxicated Gopi. It is only the devotee of the Lord who has subdued carnality that becomes possessed by Krishna-*prema* or the love of Krishna. The mystic experience of Brahman as the blissful is pictured in the "Bhagavata" which is justly regarded as the most sublime exposition of this truth.

The *avatara* or incarnation of Rama and Krishna is according to Hindu thought, the manifestation of Transcendental Beauty in human form to satisfy the mystic yearning of the *jnani* or seer for the soul-sight of the divine Enchanter. The beauty of the *avatara* is elusive, but not illusory. It has an irresistible charm by which the *jiva* is ravished out of its fleshly feeling. The beauty of Sri Rama was so entrancing, according to Valmiki, that the *rishis* and *yogis* of the forest of Dandaka were spell-bound by its contemplation. They became later the Gopis of Brindavan to enjoy once again its ineffable bliss or *rasa*. Suka Brahmam, the born Vedantin, that loved Himalayan repose and the *santarasa* of *samadhi*, was drawn into the charmed circle at Brindavan and became intoxicated with the *lila* of Sri Krishna. The tenth canto of the "Bhagavata" is a divine comedy portraying the *lila* of love and stands unmatched in mystic literature for its moving power. The Holy of Holies that is absolutely free from evil and from the taint of sin (*Yogesvarisvara*) transforms Himself into the ravisher of souls (*Manmatha-manmatha*). Only the pure in heart, that are free from

the lusts of the flesh, can appreciate and revel in Krishna-*prema* or love of Krishna. Sri Krishna is *niravayava* (formless) and *nirguna* (attributeless) since He is not conditioned by *prakrti* and its *gunas*. He is pure and perfect and is the Lord of *karma* and not its slave. The cosmic deities including Varuna, Indra and Brahma who suffered from the sin of self-conceit, realised their folly and surrendered their wills to the supreme Will of Sri Krishna. By his *yogamaya*, he humbled the pride of Brahma, the creator, who carried away the cows and the boys in whose charge they were. The Lord created them anew by His *yogamaya* and a new love entered into the very heart of the City Beautiful. Brahma was bewildered when he beheld Sri Krishna in each cow and in each cowherd. He was seized with wonder and worshipped the dust of Brindavan to free himself from the ugliness of his self-conceit. The Lord is described as *Syamasundara*, *Madanamohana* and *Trailokyakanta*, the divine Enchanter who captivates the hearts of all beings in the universe by His bewitching beauty. All men and women were entranced at the sight of Divine beauty, animals stood spell-bound like statues, and even plants responded to the music of His love. The divine Artist who is of beauty all compact transfigured the whole of Brindavan into a realm of beauty. All trace of ugliness was dispelled. All beings, animate and inanimate, wore the colour of Krishna-*prema* and breathed the atmosphere of love that surrounded them. The celestials and saints of the higher worlds became conscious of the ugliness of their *ahankara* or egotism,

and adored the new creation of the Lord in Brindavan as things of Beauty and Truth that are for ever joyful. No poet or painter, however powerfully endowed with imagination, could create a world of beauty which could reveal the living Beauty that was Brindavan. The Divine Enchanter humanised Himself to divinise the soul.

The episode called *Rasakrida* is unique in all literature for it represents in highly poetic language the mystic marriage of the Infinite Self with the finite selves and the eternal dance in the hearts of mystics yearning for the love of Krishna ravished by His supreme beauty. It is a beautiful moon-lit night in the forest of Brindavan; the waters of the Jumna flow on sparkling like silver while reflecting the beams of the moon. The trees and plants burst into blossom as if adorning themselves for the interview with the Divine Bride-groom. The air is surcharged with the perfume of flowers, wafted in all directions by the gentle breeze. The birds sing their sweetest notes. Nature has worn her brightest garments for the approach of her Lord. The gods dwelling in *Svarga* are drawn towards the earth by this strange spell of beauty. The Divine Ravisher of souls suddenly appears decked with flowers and peacock-feathers and plays an enchanting and mystic tune on His flute which only the souls of mystics can hear. The Gopis, who were *yoginis* eager to see the *Yogamayin*, were the very impersonations of purity and spiritual love. They leave their homes, their effect is heightened by *vislesha* or love in absence. Sri

husbands and their children and rush towards Brindavan drawn irresistibly by the power of Divine Love. A scene of revelry, music and dance follows, the Lord of Souls linked in communion with every one of the Gopis present there. In this mystic dance there are as many Krishnas as there are Gopis. The Gopis are immersed in the ecstatic joy of divine communion which only the pure in heart can understand, imagine, or realise. Suka, the seer, concludes the description with these words: "Thus in His *lila*, the Supreme Lord played with them though His enjoyment is only in Himself."

Rasa lila is really the eternal dance of Divine Lore in human hearts. In the world of *lila*, Beauty Absolute plays with the finite self in order to impart Its beauty and bliss to it. Beauty is no doubt immanent in the world of nature and art, and in the bloom of life, in the choral procession of nature and in the grace and glow of virtue, Beauty has a local habitation and name. Since God is beautiful, His creation, which is a divine comedy, is also beautiful. But the *jiva* weighted with worldliness and the egoistic feeling of *ahankara* soils itself and suffers from ugliness, evil and ignorance. Its innate love of beauty, however, creates the longing for the true home in the Beauty that is transcendental and increases its home sickness. By a self-naughting process, the seeker after Beauty, as a mystic, gradually sheds the ugly forms of *ahankara* and soars to his spiritual country yonder by the straight and shining path. Led by the

divine Artist, he climbs up by the ladder of beauty from the world of sense-perception to the realm of reason, and from reason to divine blessedness. Then the dividing line between the *lila* of love and its consummation in eternal communion is cut asunder and the mystic attains a soul-sight of the Shining Beauty which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard. This realm of beauty is super-sensible and super-aesthetic, and when the mystic realises this state, he becomes a *mukta* who no more returns to the world of *samsara*. In *mukti* there is loss in personality and not of personality.

Paramapada is a shining, spiritual world and *ananda loka* made of beauty and bliss. It is a noumenal realm beyond space and time, which cannot be perceived by the senses nor conceived by the logical intellect. But the mystic summons us to share in the bliss of Brahman which is ineffable and incommunicable, and employs sense symbols to give us a glimpse of this transcendental beauty. The allegories employed by Plato and Plotinus to describe the ideas of beauty and the glories of the spiritual realm are but poor symbols in comparison with the mystic language employed by the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* in its poetic portrayal of *Paramapada* and *Vaikuntha*. In that realm yonder, matter shines brilliantly in an *aprakrta* form without any modifications. The eternal is immanent in the temporal, and the *mukta* views everything under the form of eternity, and the fecundity of its bliss is an eternal now as being and becoming are one. The living light of Brahman is a light not located but is infinite, and as *paramjotis* is

more effulgent than thousand suns. In His infinite love, He creates a body of His own with matchless spiritual beauty with a view to beautify the self and impart is nature. When the *mukta* soars to *Vaikuntha* and has a soul-sight of the bewitching beauty of Brahman without any taint or trace of error, evil and ugliness, the *atman* is *Brahmanised* and absorbed in eternal bliss. He is *Brahmanised* and enjoys *Brahma-rupa* (splendour), *Brahmagandha* (fragrance) and *Brahmarasa* (savour). Then his self-feeling melts away and his thought expires in the ecstasy of union or *avibhaga*, without losing his self-being. The Lord of Beauty thus shines for ever in His own realm; He creates forms of beauty and plays with them and finally becomes one with them. The mystic seeks communion with Beauty and is lost in bliss. The aloofness of God is changed into godlikeness and finally into godliness. Beauty thus beautifies the soul and the soul is lost in the bliss of Brahman.

By way of summary of the whole theme the method consisting of *tatva*, *hita* and *purushartha* or metaphysics, morals and mysticism may be followed with advantage. The metaphysical aspect is the description of Brahman as *Bhuvanasundara* or cosmic Beauty. The moral aspect is that of love and the mystic way is that of Blissful communion between the self and its Lord who is *Manmathamanmatha*. The three are distinguishable but not divisible. Beauty is love and love is Bliss and the three are one. What is *tatva* is *hita* and *hita*

is *purushartha*. The source, sustenance and satisfaction of Beauty are indivisible.

Sri Krishna is Beauty, Love and Bliss all united as one. His Beauty is entrancing and ravishing. The existence of Beauty is its direct experience and being and becoming are one; being is becoming and dynamic and what becomes is one. In this way cosmic Beauty (*Bhuvanasundara*) is transformed into the mystic bliss of *Manmathamanmatha*. Beauty, love and bliss are blended into one and it is *Brahmananda* or Ineffable Supreme Bliss. Ananda is varied and measured; it grows from sense-pleasure to spiritual happiness and from spiritual happiness to Divine Bliss. That exalted state exceeds reflection as reflection passes on into rapture.

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